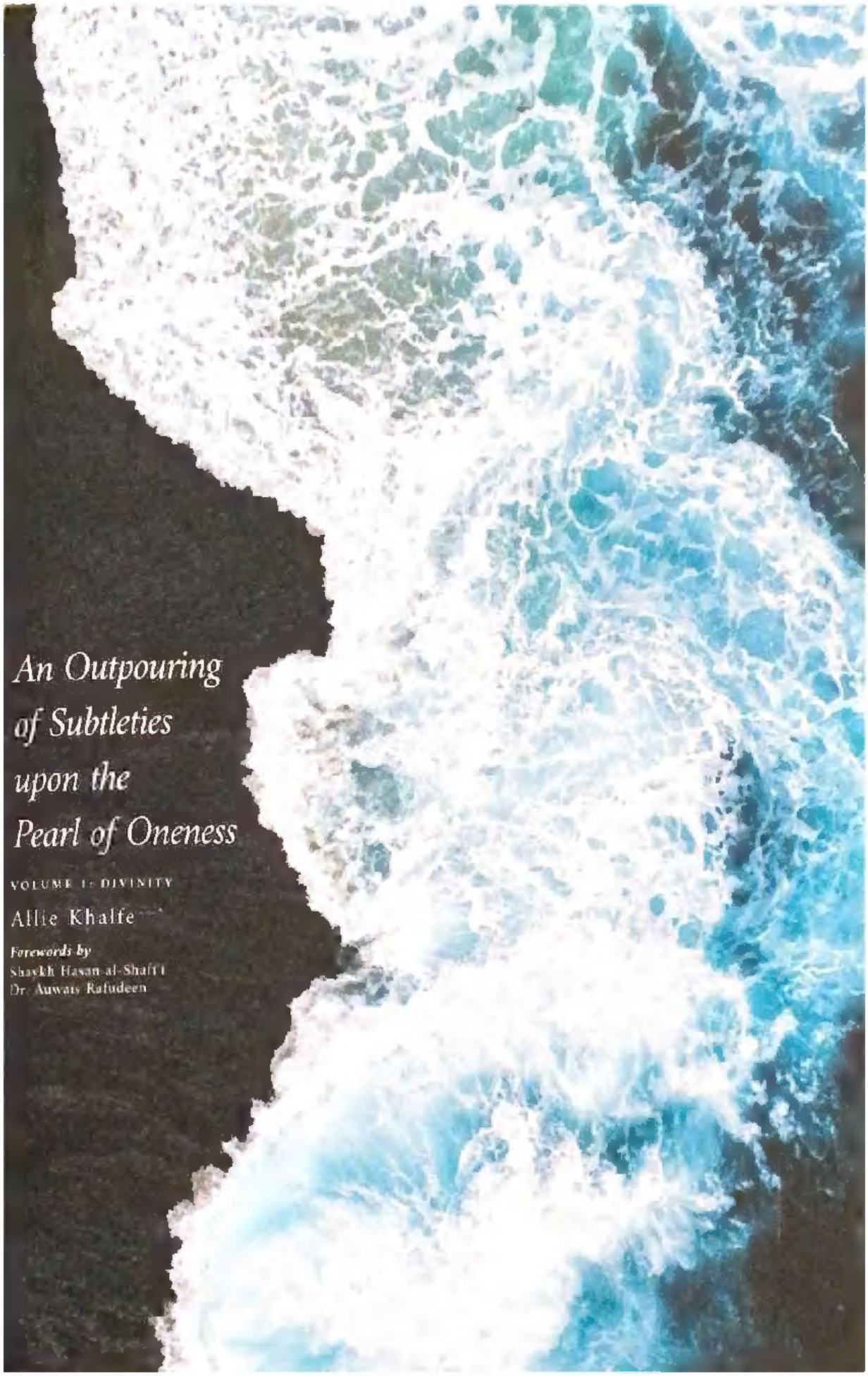

# *An Outpouring of Subtleties upon the Pearl of Oneness*

VOLUME I: DIVINITY

Allie Khalfe

*Forewords by*
Shaykh Hasan al-Shafi'i
Dr. Auwais Rafudeen

# An Outpouring of Subtleties

## *Upon the Pearl of Oneness*

فيض اللطيف على جوهرة التوحيد

*Fayḍ al-Laṭīf ʿalā Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*

Volume 1

Divinity



*By Allie Khalfe*

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Dedicated to my parents,
Ahmed & Zuleikha

*—Allie Khalfe*

## Transliteration Table

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ا/ٱ | ā | ظ | ẓ |
| ب | b | ع | ʿ |
| ت | t | غ | gh |
| ث | th | ف | f |
| ج | j | ق | q |
| ح | ḥ | ك | k |
| خ | kh | ل | l |
| د | d | م | m |
| ذ | dh | ن | n |
| ر | r | ه | h |
| ز | z | و | w/ū |
| س | s | ي | y/ī |
| ش | sh | ة | a |
| ص | ṣ | ء | ʾ |
| ض | ḍ | إ | a/u |
| ط | ṭ | إ | i |

## Honorific Phrases

| | |
|---|---|
| ﷻ | Exalted and Sublime is He |
| ﷺ | Allah's prayers and salutations be upon him |
| ﷺ | Allah's prayers and salutations be upon him and his Family |
| ﷺ | Peace be upon him |
| ﷺ | Peace be upon them |
| ﷺ | May Allah be pleased with him |
| ﷺ | May Allah be pleased with her |
| ﷺ | May Allah be pleased with them both |
| ﷺ | May Allah be pleased with them |

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## About the Author

Allie Khalif spent a decade learning various traditional texts from Shaykh Seraj and Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks who are the current Shaykhs of the Azzawia Institute in Walmer Estate, Cape Town. They in turn graduated from the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca specializing in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and spent about ten years at the feet of the ocean of knowledge, al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. ʿAlawī al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī ﷺ.

Ustādh Allie received from them the license [*ijāza*] to transmit various branches of knowledge, including Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*], theology [*ʿilm al-tawḥīd*], as well as the spiritual sciences [*taṣawwuf*]. He also spent two years at the grand al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, sitting at the feet of some of the foremost scholars alive today, including Shaykh Saʿīd Mamdūḥ, Shaykh ʿAlī Jumuʿa, Shaykh Fatḥī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥijāzī, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Shāfiʿī, and Shaykh Hishām Kāmil, may Allah preserve them, all of whom he read traditional texts to and received *ijāza* from to transmit these texts.

Ustādh Allie is currently completing his Masters in Islamic Studies with a focus on theology at UNISA and is the founder of The IslamicText Institute in Surrey Estate, Cape Town. He also lectures on theology at the International Peace College of South Africa (IPSA) and has been sanctioned as an ambassador of *Dār al-Iftāʾ al-Miṣriyya* in Egypt.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# FOREWORD BY
# SHAYKH ḤASAN AL-SHĀFIʿĪ AL-AZHARĪ

ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO ALLAH, and may the prayers and salutations of Allah be upon the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muḥammad, his Household, his Companions and all those who follow them.

During mid *Jumāda al-Ūlā*, 1435 H. according to the Islamic calendar, in the blessed city of Cairo—may Allah preserve it—I received the request to write an introduction to this work by my student and brother, Ustādh Allie Khalfe, a student of sacred knowledge at al-Azhar al-Sharīf. Before I begin my introduction to the translation of the *Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*, which was authored by Imam al-Laqānī in the science *tawḥīd*, I would like to mention two points:

The first is regarding the virtues of traditional expeditions of knowledge, which distinguish the culture and history of Islam. This has brought about a unique connection and relationship between the Islamic lands of Africa, Asia and the entire Islamic world, which is increasing around the globe. These journeys also nourish the different schools of thought and cultures, and enrich the dispersing of ancient theological learning and the different systems and models of wisdom, which flourished in specific times and places and spread throughout the Islamic nation.

Al-Azhar al-Sharīf in Egypt is one such institution of knowledge and a beacon of Islamic culture, as it fully embraces the voyage of learning. Al-Azhar al-Sharif must be applauded for producing the finest fruits, our scholars, who call towards beneficial knowledge and a sound understanding of Islam. Knowledge indeed gushes from al-Azhar al-Sharīf like fountains from the earth.

The second point I would like to make is to emphasise the diligence that this student of knowledge has shown. Shaykh Allie Khalfe has chosen to present a gift to his family and fellow countrymen in South Africa—in it are rare and splendid jewels





from the *Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*. This is a work of knowledge and intellectual research, focussing on the oneness of Allah, which is considered as the most noble of sciences and greatest of quests.

It is also a text that makes clear the truth and veritable nature of the Prophets and Messengers, the resurrection on the Day of Judgement, and so much more. As for his reward in translating this text, I mention what the noble Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: "Good in this world will be rewarded with good in the next, and disobedience in this world will be returned with punishment in the next."

The science of *tawḥīd* is the underlying pillar of all other sciences, and is referred to as scholastic theology [*ʿilm al-kalām*] or the fundamentals of religion [*uṣūl al-dīn*]. The text of Imam al-Laqānī is one that is studied and taught at many institutions around the world, and has indeed received tremendous accolades over the centuries. Imam al-Laqānī was one of the renowned scholars of al-Azhar al-Sharīf, in the eleventh century of Islam (approximately four hundred years ago) and, needless to say, research into his *Jawhara* and into the science of theology continues to this day at al-Azhar al-Sharīf. Numerous commentaries and footnotes have been written on the *Jawhara*, the first by Imam al-Laqānī himself. The most important and most noble compilations have been produced by two scholars, both of whom held the position of Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar al-Sharīf, a high and noble seat that cannot be attained except by the most senior scholars of sacred knowledge. These Shaykhs are none other than Shaykh al-Amīr al-Kabīr and Imam al-Bājūrī.

Shaykh Allie Khalfe selected the commentary of Imam al-Bājūrī as a reference for the English speaking audience for two reasons: first, because it is more concise and less extensive than the commentary of Shaykh al-Amīr. Secondly, the author presents detailed discussions of each chapter and brings forth such clarity that it has facilitated many students of knowledge to experience the easiest and most accessible way to understand the various Islamic sciences. Until today, his commentary has proved the best for beginners when compared to that of the esteemed Shaykh al-Amīr.

I have read the chapters that have been translated into English and found myself content with them. It is my hope that this translation will provide the English reader with a clear and concise example of Islamic theology.

It is said that a translator does not translate except that he leaves certain things out from the original text. Someone who undertakes the translation of the text of knowledge and philosophy is required to take heed of the minute details, for there might be some differences between the original text and the translation, as is the case with my introduction, which has been translated from Arabic to English.

Our son, Shaykh Allie Khalfe, is an intelligent student of knowledge. I pray that Allah accepts him, that He strengthens and aid him. He has reached a high station with a sound understanding of the original text and has expressed that within his translation.

May Allah reward him and his family with the best of rewards, *āmin*. I request from him to remain sincere in his knowledge and to make good use of it. His responsibility is to teach and spread the knowledge he has been blessed with. I request from him to pray for us, his teachers, and the entire Muslim *umma*.

*Āmīn*

Friday, 15th of *Jumāda al-Ūlā*, 1437 H.
6th of March, 2015
Cairo



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# FOREWORD BY
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THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT that the modern world has presented enormous intellectual challenges to Muslims, and it sometimes appears that we have difficulty in responding to these challenges—challenges that often deliberately seek to undermine the role that our religion and faith should play in our lives.

However, in essence, these challenges are not new. They have long been discussed and addressed by Muslim scholars throughout the ages—especially by those specialising in the domain of Islamic creed [*'aqīda*] and theology [*'ilm al-kalām*]. A study of their works will show the deeply sober and intellectually precise way in which they responded to issues such as materialism and relativism on the one hand, while providing a firm rational basis and explanation of Islamic beliefs on the other.

To a large extent, our difficulty in responding to contemporary intellectual challenges is born out of ignorance of this rich traditional scholarly legacy. For various reasons, we simply do not have access—or are even aware of—the works in this regard, which constitute a crucial part of the traditional Muslim learning environment. One of the reasons, of course, is simply the issue of language: the vast majority of these works have not been translated and remain inaccessible to non-Arabic speaking audiences.

In this regard, our dear friend and brother in Islam, Shaykh Allie Khalfe, has done us a tremendous service by translating this famous work—Imam al-Bājūrī's commentary on Imam al-Laqānī's theological poem—for the English speaking world. This translation allows us to truly enter the rich, fascinating world of Islamic beliefs and theology, inhabited by scholars who were fearless in their convictions, precise in their arguments, deeply knowledgeable in a number of fields and, above all, had the ability to revive our faith.

A serious study of a classical text such as this one should shed any inferiority complex a Muslim may feel when confronted by the intellectual claims of those bent on undermining the religion.

However, traditional knowledge was never been meant to be passed down wholesale, without any allowance for time and change. Texts have always been interpreted for the milieu in which they are taught. In this regard, Shaykh Allie has further illumined this work by providing copious notes and explanations to the many points contained in the text. These will be most welcomed by the reader.

Finally, this work also acts as a tribute to the Islamic tradition as general and to the teachers that have constantly upheld that tradition. Here we can mention two of Shaykh Allie's own teachers, Shaykh Seraj and Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks of the Azzawia in Cape Town, who have consistently demonstrated, to all those who have had the privilege of attending their classes, the continuing vitality, importance and relevance of this tradition.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION

I [ALLIE KHALFE], narrate this text as I heard it [*simā'an*] from the Shaykh, the ocean of knowledge, the one of immense insight and high intellect, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Hendricks; and with permission to transmit it [*ijāzatan*] from the Shaykh, the inheritor of the scholars of Mecca and blessing to our city, Shaykh Sirāj b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Hendricks. I also narrate it *ijāzatan* from the treasure and senior jurist of Cairo, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Shāfi'ī al-Ḥanafī, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

Shaykh Aḥmad and Shaykh Sirāj narrate it from their uncle, Shaykh Mahdī Hendricks, *simā'an*, and from Sayyid Muḥammad b. 'Alawī al-Mālikī *ijāzatan*. Shaykh Mahdī narrates it *simā'an* from his father, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Hendricks, and *ijāzatan* from his Shaykhs, Shaykh 'Umar Bā Junayd, Sayyid Bakr al-Bār, and Sayyid 'Abbās al-Mālikī.

Sayyid 'Abbās al-Mālikī, Sayyid 'Alawi al-Mālikī, and Shaykh 'Umar Bā Junayd narrate from Sayyid Bakrī Shaṭṭā, from Sayyid Aḥmad Daḥlān, from Shaykh 'Uthmān Dimyāṭī, from Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Sharqāwī, from Imam al-Bājūrī.

Shaykh 'Uthmān al-Dimyāṭī also narrates from Shaykh Muḥammad al-Shanawānī, from Sayyid 'Īsā al-Barāwī, from Shaykh Muḥammad al-Dufarī, from Shaykh Sālim al-Baṣrī, from his father, Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Baṣrī, from Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alā' al-Bābilī, from Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ghunaymī, from Imam Shams al-Dīn al-Ramli, from Shaykh al-Islam Mawlānā Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, from Sayyid Taqi b. Fahd, from Shaykh Majd al-Luqhawī, from Shaykh Sirāj al-Qazwīnī, from Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Taftāzānī, from Qāḍī Bakr al-Harawī, from Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī, from his father, Diyā' 'Umar al-Rāzī, from Abū al-Qāsim al-Isfarāyinī, from Ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyinī, from Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bāhilī, from Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

# IMAM IBRĀHĪM AL-LAQĀNĪ

## THE NOBLE AUTHOR OF THE *JAWHARA*

He is Shaykh Ibrāhīm b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. 'Alī b. Alī b. 'Abd al Quddūs b. al-Walī al-Shahīr Muḥammad b. Hārūn. It is said that Sayyid Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī once passed by his father and said to him: "*You carry in your loins a saint whose command will reach the east and west.*" He is the Imam, known ■ the father of assistance, Burhān al-Dīn al-Laqānī al-Mālikī al-Azharī. He was a master in the science of Hadith and an ocean in the science of theology. His exact birth date has not been recorded, while it is known that he was born in Egypt and passed away in 1041 H. on his return from Hajj. His family name is said to be linked to Laqāna, [pronounced] like the word *ṣaḥāba*, the name of a village ■ the Buḥayra area in Egypt, as mentioned by al-Zabīdī in his work, Tāj al-'Arūs. It has also been narrated that his family name, al-Laqānī, is pronounced like the word *ṣaḥābī*, without the emphasis [*shadda*] on the letter *qāf*. This was narrated by al-Muḥibbī in his *Khulāṣa al-Athar*. He went so far as to spell it with a *fatha* (a) on the *lām* and the *qāf*, followed by the *alif* and the *nūn*. He did not mention anything about a *shadda* on the *qāf*.

He followed the school of Imam Mālik in jurisprudence and the school of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī in creed. His teachers amongst the *Shāfi'is* included the erudite scholar of Islam, the Gnostic, Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ramlī, author of the *Nihāya al-Muḥtāj Sharḥ al-Minhāj*, and the erudite scholar Shaykh Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-'Abbādī, author of *al-Āyāt al-Bayyināt 'alā al-Waraqāt*.

His teachers from amongst the *Mālikis* included Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm al-Barmūnī, Shaykh Ṭāhā al-Sāṭi', the erudite scholar Shaykh Abū Najā Muḥammad b. Sālim al-Sanhūrī, and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Munyāwī.

His teachers from amongst the *Hanafis* included the erudite scholar and Shaykh al-Islam 'Alī b. Ghānim al-Maqdisī, as well ■ Shaykh Shams Muḥammad al-Naḥrīrī, and the erudite scholar Shaykh Umar b. Nujaym, author of many treasured works in the *Hanafi* school.





His Shaykhs in the Sufi path included Shaykh Aḥmad al-Bulqīnī al-Wazīrī, Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Tarjumān, Shaykh Aḥmad 'Arab al-Sharnūbī, and many others. It is said that Imam al-Laqānī spent most of his time seeking knowledge from Imam Abū al-Najā Sālim al-Sanhūrī, followed by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Buhnisī. Every three years, he would complete a reading of the major books of Hadith in the months of Rajab, Sha bān, and Ramadan, during the night and day. After al-Buhnisī, he spent most of his time learning from Shaykh Yaḥyā al-Qarāfī al-Mālikī, the Imam of the people [*nās*] in Hadith.

Imam al-Laqānī's students included his son, Abd al-Salām, as well as Shams al-Bābilī, 'Alā' al-Shabrāmallisī, Yūsuf al-Fāsī, Yāsīn al-'Alīmī al-Ḥimsī, Ḥusayn al-Namāwī, Ḥusayn al-Khafājī, Aḥmad al-'Ujaymī, Muḥammad al-Kharshī al-Mālikī, and many others. It is said that no scholar of his time had more students than him.

He compiled over fifteen books, the most famous being *Jawhara al-Tawhīd*. It is said that he composed the *Jawhara* in a single sitting at the age of seventeen by the instruction of his Shaykh, Aḥmad 'Arab al-Sharnūbī, and provided an extensive commentary titled *Hidāya al-Murid*, also known as *Jawāhir al-Kabīr*. He completed his commentary on the 2nd of Ṣafar, 1029 H.

# Imam Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī

He is Shaykh al-Islam Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī b. Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Jayzāwī b. Aḥmad al-Shāfi'ī, the imam and Shaykh of Cairo's al-Azhar University in Egypt during the nineteenth century CE.

He was born in the village of Bājūr (sometimes referred to as Bayjūr) in the Manūfiyya province in the year 1198 H. The village of Bājūr was described as having five mosques, each housing a tomb of the deceased namesake of the mosque. It also contained one *zāwiya* (lodge) called Ajūr, indicating a strong Sufi presence in the village. Attached to the *zāwiya* were a poultry farm and eleven small gardens that produced various types of fruit, one of which was bequeathed to the descendants of a certain Rustum Bayk, who was buried there, and the rest being for some of the residents of the area.

The late nineteenth century saw the village having a population of fewer than two thousand people, all of whom were Muslim. The people of Bājūr were famous for making a liquorice root drink and for growing cotton. The village itself was well known for the luminaries it produced and Imam al-Bājūrī in particular. Raised on memorising the Qur'an, he left for Cairo in the year 1212 H., where he studied under the most prominent scholars of his day. Imam al-Bājūrī became Shaykh al-Azhar at the age of sixty-four, a position that he held until the end of his life.

Included amongst his Shaykhs were the luminaries Imam Muḥammad al-Amīr al-Kabīr al-Mālikī, Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Sharqāwī al-Shāfi'ī, who was also the Shaykh al-Azhar of his time, Shaykh Dāwūd al-Qal'āwī, and Shaykh Muḥammad al-Faḍālī, whom Imam al-Bājūrī remained with until his death.

Imam al-Bājūrī studied and taught from dawn to dusk, and yet still found the time to pen many texts. After nightfall, he was heard reading the Qur'an, by hundreds, in the most melodious voice. He was the Shaykh of the *Shāfi'ī* school in his day and authored one of the most outstanding commentaries on the classical *Shāfi'ī fiqh* work, namely *Matn Abī Shujā'*, as a *ḥāshiya* upon the commentary of Ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī.





He also wrote commentaries on *Jam' al-Jawāmi' fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* of Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya*, and the famous *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* of Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, to name but a few. Most of his works are referred to as the 'Marginalia of al-Bājūrī' [*Hāshiya al-Bājūrī*] in respect to the many commentaries he wrote. It was in 1263 H. that he found himself appointed as Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar University, one of the most prominent and honourable positions a scholar could hold in Egypt.

The position of Shaykh al-Azhar is considered one of the highest authorities in Sunni Islamic thought and Islamic jurisprudence, and has been a great influence on followers of the theological *Ash'arī* and *Māturidī* traditions worldwide.

# جوهرة التوحيد

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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| ١ | اَلْحَمْدُ لله عَلَى صِلاَتِهِ | ثُمَّ سَلاَمُ اللهِ مَعْ صَلاَتِهِ |
| ٢ | عَلَى نَبِيٍّ جَاءَ بِالتَّوْحِيدِ | وَقَدْ عَرَى الدِّينُ عَنِ التَّوْحِيدِ |
| ٣ | فَأَرْشَدَ الخَلْقَ لِدِينِ الحَقِّ | بِسَيْفِهِ وَهَدْيِهِ لِلْحَقِّ |
| ٤ | مُحَمَّدُ العَاقِبُ لِرُسْلِ رَبِّهِ | وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَحِزْبِهِ |
| ٥ | وَبَعْدُ فَالْعِلْمُ بِأَصْلِ الدِّينِ | مُحَتَّمٌ يَحْتَاجُ لِلتَّبْيِينِ |
| ٦ | لٰكِنْ مِنَ التَّطْوِيلِ كَلَّتِ الهِمَمْ | فَصَارَ فِيهِ الإِخْتِصَارُ مُلْتَزَمْ |
| ٧ | وَهٰذِهِ أُرْجُوزَةٌ لَقَّبْتُهَا | جَوْهَرَةَ التَّوْحِيدِ قَدْ هَذَّبْتُهَا |
| ٨ | وَاللهَ أَرْجُو فِي القَبُولِ نَافِعاً | بِهَا مُرِيداً فِي الثَّوَابِ طَامِعاً |



# THE PEARL OF ONENESS

*In the name of Allah,*
*most Gracious, most Merciful*

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| 1 | *All praise is due to Allah for His favours* | *Followed by the salutations of Allah and His prayers* |
| 2 | *Upon a Prophet who came with belief in oneness* | *When religion was bereft of belief in oneness* |
| 3 | *Then he guided the creation to the religion of the Truth* | *With his sword and guidance towards the truth* |
| 4 | *Muḥammad ﷺ, the last of the Messengers of his Lord* | *And his Family, his Companions and his party* |
| 5 | *To proceed, knowledge of the foundation of the religion* | *Is compulsory, and requires clarification* |
| 6 | *However, due to its lengthiness, aspirations dwindled* | *Hence, brevity in it became necessary* |
| 7 | *And this poem I have named* | *The Pearl of Oneness, and I have beautified it* |
| 8 | *And in Allah do I hope for acceptance, benefitting* | *By it, for the one seeking, desiring its reward* |

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| ٩ | فَكُلُّ مَنْ كُلِّفَ شَرْعاً وَجَبَا | عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ مَا قَدْ وَجَبَا |
| ١٠ | للهِ وَالجَائِزَ وَالمُمْتَنِعَا | وَمِثْلَ ذَا لِرُسْلِهِ فَاسْتَمِعَا |
| ١١ | إِذْ كُلُّ مَنْ قَلَّدَ فِي التَّوْحِيدِ | إِيمَانُهُ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ تَرْدِيدِ |
| ١٢ | فَفِيهِ بَعْضُ القَوْمِ يَحْكِي الخُلْفَا | وَبَعْضُهُمْ حَقَّقَ فِيهِ الكَشْفَا |
| ١٣ | فَقَالَ إِنْ يَجْزِمْ بِقَوْلِ الغَيْرِ | كَفَى وَإِلا لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي الضَّيْرِ |
| ١٤ | وَاجْزِمْ بِأَنَّ أَوَّلاً مِمَّا يَجِبْ | مَعْرِفَةٌ وَفِيهِ خُلْفٌ مُنْتَصِبْ |
| ١٥ | فَانْظُرْ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ ثُمَّ انْتَقِلِ | لِلْعَالَمِ العُلْوِيِّ ثُمَّ السُّفْلِي |
| ١٦ | تَجِدْ بِهِ صُنْعاً بَدِيعَ الحِكَمِ | لَكِنْ بِهِ قَامَ دَلِيلُ العَدَمِ |





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| 9 | *And for every accountable person it is a legal obligation* | *For him to know what is necessary* |
| 10 | *For Allah, the permissible and the impossible* | *And the like thereof for His Messengers, so listen carefully* |
| 11 | *Since anyone who follows another in the belief in oneness* | *His faith is not safe from doubt* |
| 12 | *And regarding it, some of the scholars mentioned the differences* | *While others verified and unveiled it* |
| 13 | *And they said, if he has firm resolve by the saying of another* | *It suffices, otherwise he remains ■ risk* |
| 14 | *And be certain that the primary obligation is knowledge* | *And there are differences of opinion regarding this* |
| 15 | *So reflect upon yourself, and then proceed* | *Towards the higher realm, then towards the lower realm* |
| 16 | *You will find in it a making of incomparable wisdom* | *However, in it, proof of its contingency is established* |

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| ١٧ | وَكُلُّ مَا جَازَ عَلَيْهِ العَدَمُ | عَلَيْهِ قَطْعاً يَسْتَحِيلُ القِدَمُ |
| ١٨ | وَفُسِّرَ الإِيمَانُ بِالتَّصْدِيقِ | وَالنُّطْقُ فِيهِ الخُلْفُ بِالتَّحْقِيقِ |
| ١٩ | فَقِيلَ شَرْطٌ كالْعَمَلْ وَقِيلَ بَلْ | شَطْرٌ وَالإِسْلاَمَ اشْرَحَنَّ بِالْعَمَلْ |
| ٢٠ | مِثَالُ هذَا الحَجُّ وَالصَّلاَةُ | كَذَا الصِّيَامُ فَاقْرِ وَالزَّكَاةُ |
| ٢١ | وَرُجِّحَتْ زِيَادَةُ الإِيمَانِ | بِمَا تَزِيدُ طَاعَةُ الإِنْسَانِ |
| ٢٢ | وَنَقْصُهُ بِنَقْصِهَا وَقِيلَ لاَ | وَقِيلَ لاَ خُلْفَ كَذَا قَدْ نُقِلا |
| ٢٣ | فَوَاجِبٌ لَهُ الوُجُودُ وَالقِدَمْ | كَذَا بَقَاءٌ لاَ يُشَابُ بِالْعَدَمْ |
| ٢٤ | وَأَنَّهُ لِمَا يَنَالُ العَدَمُ | مُخَالِفٌ بُرْهَانُ هذَا القِدَمُ |





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| 17 | *And anything for which non-existence is permissible* | *Pre-eternality is definitively impossible for it* |
| 18 | *And faith is explained as true conviction* | *And regarding its utterance, there are differences of opinion, as has been verified* |
| 19 | *It was said to be a conditi[illegible] like actions, while others said, no,* | *It is part of it, and Islam is explained as actions* |
| 20 | *Examples of this are the Hajj and prayer* | *Likewise, fasting, so comprehend this, along with alms* |
| 21 | *And the stronger opinion is that faith increases* | *Due to increase in the obedience of the human being* |
| 22 | *And it decreases due to a decrease of it, and some said that it does not* | *Yet others said there is no disagreement, as has been transmitted* |
| 23 | *Necessary for Him is existence and pre-eternality* | *Likewise, eternality, which is not affected by non-existence* |
| 24 | *And whatsoever is affected by non-existence* | *He is Dissimilar from it, the proof for this is (His) pre-eternality* |

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| ٢٥ | قِيَامُهُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَحْدَانِيَّهْ | مُنَزَّهاً أَوْصَافُهُ سَنِيَّ |
| ٢٦ | عَنْ ضِدٍّ أَوْ شِبْهٍ شَرِيكٍ مُطْلَقاً | وَوَالِدٍ كَذَا الوَلَدْ وَالأَصْدِقَا |
| ٢٧ | وَقُدْرَةٌ إِرَادَةٌ وَغَايَرَتْ | أَمْراً وَعِلْماً وَالرِّضَا كَمَا ثَبَتْ |
| ٢٨ | وَعِلْمُهُ وَلاَ يُقَالُ مُكْتَسَبْ | فَاتْبَعْ سَبِيلَ الحَقِّ وَاطْرَحِ الرَّيْبَ |
| ٢٩ | حَيَاتُهُ كَذَا الكَلاَمُ السَّمْعُ | ثُمَّ البَصَرْ بِذِي أَتَانَا السَّمْعُ |
| ٣٠ | فَهَلْ لَهُ إِدْرَاكٌ أَوْ لاَ خُلْفُ | وَعِنْدَ قَوْمٍ صَحَّ فِيهِ الوَقْفُ |
| ٣١ | حَيٌّ عَلِيمٌ قَادِرٌ مُرِيدُ | سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ مَا يَشَا يُرِيدُ |
| ٣٢ | مُتَكَلِّمٌ ثُمَّ صِفَاتُ الذَّاتِ | لَيْسَتْ بِغَيْرٍ أَوْ بِعَيْنِ الذَّاتِ |





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| 25 | *Self-subsistence, and oneness* | *Transcendent are His noble attributes* |
| 26 | *Above an opposite, a resemblance, or a partner, absolutely* | *Or a father, likewise, a son, and friends* |
| 27 | *And power, (and) will, are distinguished from* | *His command, knowledge, and contentment, as has been affirmed* |
| 28 | *And His knowledge is not said to be acquired* | *So follow the path of truth, and shun all doubts* |
| 29 | *His life, likewise, speech, hearing, and sight* | *Are established through textual proofs* |
| ■ | *Is perception to be attributed to Him or not, there are differences of opinion* | *And according to a group it is correct to suspend judgement* |
| 31 | *Living, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Willing* | *All-Hearing, All-Seeing, whatever He wishes, He wills* |
| 32 | *Speaking, then the attributes of the Essence* | *Are neither other than the Essence, nor the Essence itself* |

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| ٣٣ | قُدْرَةٌ بِمُمْكِنٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ | بِلَا تَنَاهٍ مَا بِهِ تَعَلَّقَتْ |
| ٣٤ | وَوَحْدَةٌ أَوْجِبْ لَهَا وَمِثْلُ ذِي | إِرَادَةٌ وَالعِلْمُ لَكِنْ عَمَّ ذِي |
| ٣٥ | وَعَمِّمْ أَيْضاً وَاجِباً وَالْمُمْتَنِعْ | وَمِثْلُ ذَا كَلَامُهُ فَلْتَتَّبِعْ |
| ٣٦ | وَكُلَّ مَوْجُودٍ أَنِطْ لِلسَّمْعِ بِهْ | كَذَا البَصَرْ إِدْرَاكُهُ إِنْ قِيلَ بِهْ |
| ٣٧ | وَغَيْرُ عِلْمٍ هٰذِهِ كَمَا ثَبَتْ | ثُمَّ الحَيَاةُ مَا بِشَيْءٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ |
| ٣٨ | وَعِنْدَنَا أَسْمَاؤُهُ العَظِيمَةْ | كَذَا صِفَاتُ ذَاتِهِ قَدِيمَةْ |
| ٣٩ | وَاخْتِيرَ أَنَّ اسْمَاهُ تَوْقِيفِيَّةْ | كَذَا الصِّفَاتُ فَاحْفَظِ السَّمْعِيَّةْ |
| ٤٠ | وَكُلَّ نَصٍّ أَوْهَمَ التَّشْبِيهَا | أَوِّلْهُ أَوْ فَوِّضْ وَرُمْ تَنْزِيهَا |





| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 33 | *Power is connected to the possible* | *Without limitation to that which it is connected to* |
| 34 | *Affirm oneness for it, and the like for* | *Will, and knowledge, which is, however, more general* |
| 35 | *And generalize it to include the necessary and the impossible* | *And likewise with His speech, ■ follow accordingly* |
| 36 | *And everything in existence, connect it to hearing* | *Likewise, sight, and perception, if it ■ affirmed* |
| 37 | *And (these are) other than knowledge, as affirmed* | *Followed by life, which is not connected to anything* |
| 38 | *And our position is that His great names* | *Likewise, the attributes of His Essence, are pre-eternal* |
| 39 | *And the chosen position is that His names are divinely established* | *Likewise, the attributes, so preserve them as transmitted* |
| 40 | *And every text that implies resemblance* | *Interpret it or consign it, and seek its transcendence* |

٤١ وَنَزِّهِ الْقُرْآنَ أَيْ كَلاَمَهْ عَنِ الْحُدُوثِ وَاحْذَرِ انْتِقَامَهْ

٤٢ وَكُلُّ نَصٍ لِلْحُدُوثِ دَلاَّ اِحْمِلْ عَلَى اللَّفْظِ الَّذِي قَدْ دَلاَّ

٤٣ وَيَسْتَحِيلُ ضِدُّ ذِي الصِّفَاتِ فِي حَقِّهِ كَالْكَوْنِ فِي الْجِهَاتِ

٤٤ وَجَائِزٌ فِي حَقِّهِ مَا أَمْكَنَا إِيجَاداً إِعْدَاماً كَرَزْقِهِ الْغِنَى

٤٥ فَخَالِقٌ لِعَبْدِهِ وَمَا عَمِلْ مُوَفِّقٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَصِلْ

٤٦ وَخَاذِلٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ بُعْدَهُ وَمُنْجِزٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ وَعْدَهُ

٤٧ فَوْزُ السَّعِيدِ عِنْدَهُ فِي الأَزَلِ كَذَا الشَّقِيُّ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتَّقِلِ

٤٨ وَعِنْدَنَا لِلْعَبْدِ كَسْبٌ كُلِّفَا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُؤَثِّراً فَلْتَعْرِفَا





41 *And declare the Qur'an transcendent, meaning, His speech* — *Above contingency, and beware of Allah's punishment*

42 *And every text alluding to contingency* — *Carry it upon the expression that it alludes to*

43 *And impossible is the opposite of these attributes* — *Such as Him being in any direction*

44 *And permissible for Him all that is possible* — *Bringing into existence and removing from it, such as giving sustenance to the wealthy*

45 *He creates the servant and his actions* — *Granting enabling grace to the one He wills to arrive*

46 *And He withholds from whom He wills, to become distant from Him* — *And He rewards the one whom He promises*

47 *The bliss of the fortunate is by Him pre-eternally* — *Likewise, the wretchedness of the unfortunate, and these are not subject to change*

*And according to us, the servant is accountable through acquiring* — *And he does not bring his actions into effect, so know this well*

٤٩ فَلَيْسَ مَجْبُوراً وَلاَ اخْتِيَارَا وَلَيْسَ كُلًّا يَفْعَلُ اخْتِيَارَا

٥٠ فَإِنْ يُثِبْنَا فَبِمَحْضِ الفَضْلِ وَإِن يُعَذِّبْ فَبِمَحْضِ العَدْلِ

٥١ وَقَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الصَّلاَحَ وَاجِبُ عَلَيْهِ زُورٌ مَا عَلَيْهِ وَاجِبُ

٥٢ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِيلاَمَهُ الأَطْفَالا وَشِبْهَهَا فَحَاذِرِ المُحَالا

٥٣ وَجَائِزٌ عَلَيْهِ خَلْقُ الشَّرّ وَالخَيْرِ كَالإِسْلاَمِ وَجَهْلِ الكُفْرِ

٥٤ وَوَاجِبٌ إِيمَانُنَا بِالْقَدَرِ وَبِالْقَضَا كَمَا أَتَى فِي الخَبَرِ

٥٥ وَمِنْهُ أَنْ يُنْظَرَ بِالأَبْصَارِ لَكِنْ بِلَا تَكْيِيفٍ وَلاَ انْحِصَارِ

٥٦ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بِجَائِزْ عُلِّقَتْ هٰذَا وَلِلْمُخْتَارِ دُنْيَا ثَبَتَتْ





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|---|---|---|
| 49 | *Thus, he is neither coerced,*<br>*nor without choice* | *And not all of his actions*<br>*are by choice* |
| 50 | *If He rewards, then it is*<br>*from His sheer grace* | *And if He punishes, then*<br>*it is from His sheer justice* |
| 51 | *And their saying,*<br>*that which is good*<br>*is obligatory* | *Upon Him, it is an awful lie,* ■<br>*nothing is obligatory upon Him* |
| 52 | *Have they not seen the pain*<br>*He causes children to suffer* | *And its likes, so beware*<br>*of absurdities* |
| 53 | *It is possible for Him*<br>*to create evil* | *And good, such as Islam, as well*<br>■ *the ignorance of disbelief* |
| 54 | *And it is necessary to*<br>*believe in predestination* | *And* ■ *the decree,*<br>*as has been reported* |
| 55 | *And from that (which is*<br>*possible) is that He*<br>*is seen with sight* | *However, without 'how,' and*<br>*without encompassing Him* |
| 56 | *For the believers this is*<br>*possible, since it* ■ *connected*<br>*(to a possible event)* | *And this is for the Chosen one*<br>*affirmed in this world* |

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# IMAM AL-BĀJŪRĪ'S INTRODUCTION TO THE *JAWHARA*

ALL PRAISE is due to Allah, the Unique [*al-Munfarid*], Who brings about both non-existence [*i'dām*] and existence [*ijād*].[1] Transcendent is He above the imperfection of deficiencies and opposites.[2] I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Who is free from partners. He is the Pre-eternal [*al-Qadīm*], Dissimilar [*Mukhālif*] from the creation, the Eternal [*al-Bāqī*], and He alone brings everything created to an end.

I bear witness that our master and Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the truthful and upright servant and the Messenger of Allah. He conveyed everything that he was ordered to convey from the Lord of the worlds [*Rabb al-'ālamīn*]. May the prayers and salutations of Allah be upon him, his Family, and his Companions, who are the pearls of the Gnostics and the flowers of the gardens of eloquence and insight.

To proceed, says the one who is most in need of his Lord, Ibrāhīm[3] b. Muḥammad al-Bājūrī, the possessor of deficiencies:[4]

[1] Here, the Imam follows the Qur'an in mentioning non-existence before existence, as Allah mentions death before life: ﴿...*The One Who created death and life*...﴾ [67:2] We often think in terms of life and death, or body and spirit, while the Qur'an speaks to us in terms of death and life, or spirit and body, so that we may come to see ourselves as spirits possessing bodies and not merely bodies possessing spirits.

[2] This means that Allah is free from the opposite of perfection, i.e., imperfection.

[3] He did not give himself the title of Shaykh or Imam, indicating his intense humility. The Prophet ﷺ said: "No one humbles himself before Allah, except that Allah elevates him."

[4] This is similar to what Imam al-Shāfi'ī said regarding his *Kitāb al-Umm* in that no work is perfect except for the Word of Allah. The Imam's humility before his Lord flows throughout his commentary on the *Jawhara*.





The author of the poem, the erudite scholar ['Allāma], the ocean of insight and immense understanding [*baḥr al-baḥr al-fahhāma*], the one from whom knowledge flows, Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Laqānī, presented this text and named it '*The Pearl of Oneness*' [*Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*].

In it, the author systemised all the unique and critical issues of this craft [*fann*]. It contains the most lustrous of pearls [*nafā'is al-durar*], radiates with beauty, and astonishes those of keen intellect.[5] Through it, many are eager to enter the garden [*riyāḍ*] of its benefits [*fawā'id*] and to experience from the fruits of its table.

Some of my brothers have asked me to write a commentary [*ḥāshiya*] on the poem. One that will unpack [*tusfiru*] its symbols [*rumūz*] and secrets [*asrār*] and lift the veil of what is hidden within it. My breast[6] was expanded so that I could respond to their request, and it is Allah alone Who knows what is hidden within it. I have thus moved with my reins [*zimām*] towards its garden and immersed my thoughts in it. It has become easy for me to do this as some of the commentaries of those with high aspiration have reached me, including that of Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām,[7] which was of the first I benefited from besides many additional commentaries from the most distinguished scholars.

I have extracted from its precious pearls and noble excellences, and composed it upon a pattern embellished and well arranged. I have also prepared some marginalia upon this honourable text and have named it: '*A Gift to the Seeker upon the Pearl of Oneness*' [*Tuḥfa al-Murīd 'alā Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*].

[5] The Imam decorates his words in a sublime way, bringing forth an appetite or desire to plunge the depths of the oneness of God [*tawḥīd*]. It is as if he is preparing a table of delicacies and inviting one and all to taste its fruits.

[6] 'Breast' here means the 'innermost recesses' of the heart. The Imam alludes to the fact that Allah alone knows whether one is sincere or not.

[7] He is the son of Imam Ibrāhīm al-Laqānī and amongst those who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on the text.

May Allah grant us sincerity [in treading this path], seeking only His noble Countenance, and may all those approaching it with a sound heart experience its benefits. It is my hope that the reader looks upon this work with the eye of pardon[8] and covers the faults that I may have inserted. Covering the fault of another is of the most honourable traits [*shaym al-kirām*] while exposing what one has kept hidden is the habit of the wretched [*da'b al-li'ām*]. It is Allah Whom I ask, and through His noble Prophet ﷺ do I seek the means [*bi-nabiyyihi atawassul*],[9] that this work gains a place of acceptance. Verily, Allah is the best in Whom one can hope [*khayru ma'mūl*] and the most Generous of Whom one could ask [*akramu mas'ūl*].

[8] The Imam once again displays his connection with his Creator. He reminds himself and the reader that we are human beings who err. He requests that the reader overlook what faults may fall upon the reader's eye. The Arabic word for mankind is *insān*, which is derived from the root *nasya*, which means 'to forget' or 'err.' As human beings, we have interwoven within our very being the potential to err and forget. How then do we respond to the next man who might err? Do we respond with belligerence and anger? Or do we respond with the eye of forgiveness? These are pertinent questions, which we need to reflect upon, as they are the key to the betterment of any society.

[9] *Tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ is a request in acknowledgement of his standing as the principal intercessor for the *umma* before Allah, and it is a request for Allah's blessing, brought into effect by Allah ﷻ the person of His Prophet ﷺ and His saints. In this introduction, the Imam makes his position clear regarding the question of *tawassul*.



# Chapter One

## The *Basmala*[10]

The *basmala* is the sacred formula, based firstly on the supreme name, Allah, and then on the two names *al-Rahmān* and *al-Rahīm*, which are both derived from mercy [*rahma*], a word encompassing love, kindness, and compassion.

### *The reasons for commencing with the basmala*

Scholars open their works with *bismillah al-rahmān al-rahīm* indicating their intention [*niyya*], which is to commence with the supreme name of Allah, as well as to emphasise their dependence on Him.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the noble author [*nāzim*] opens his work with the *basmala*, followed by the *hamdala*,[11] for two reasons. First, because it is in accordance [*iqtidā'an*] with the Qur'an in the way it begins and the order in which it has been placed [*al-tartīb al-tawqīfī*], although not necessarily in the order of its revelation.[12] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*[13] and other major Hadith collections indicate that the first verse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was ﴿*Read* [*Iqrā'*]﴾ and not the *basmala*.

[10] Beneficial notes on the *basmala* from Imam al-Bājūrī's commentary on the *Jawhara*, the *Risāla* of Imam al-Qushayrī, and the *Ghunya* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

[11] The *basmala* refers to *bismillah al-rahmān al-rahīm*, while the *hamdala* refers to *al-hamdulillah*. This is called *naht* in the Arabic language, which is a word-formation process using the initial letters or syllables of a string of words in a formula to create a quadrilateral noun.

[12] Although the *basmala* appears at the beginning of each chapter in the Qur'an, it was not revealed in this particular order, nor was it the first verse revealed to the Prophet ﷺ. It is therefore in harmony with the sequence and style of the Qur'an, but not necessarily the sequence of revelation.

[13] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is considered one of the three most reliable collections of Hadith along with *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Imam Mālik. A Hadith is sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*] when all its narrators are trustworthy and veracious. This is the highest grade of Hadith.

It has been reported by Abū Bakr al-Tūnisī[14] that it is the consensus of the scholars that Allah opened all His Books[15] with the *basmala*.

The second reason for the author to open his work with the *basmala* is because this is commensurate with acting upon [*'amalan*] the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in which he said: "Every matter that does not commence with 'in the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful' is in itself deficient (or 'cut off' [from blessings])" [*kullu amrin dhī bālin lā yubda'u fīhi bi-bismillah al-raḥmān al-raḥim fa-huwa abtar (aw 'ajdham' aw 'aqṭa')*].[16]

This is the case even though the act may seem physically correct [*ḥissan*]; it will not be complete in meaning [*ma'nan*]. In a similar Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Every matter that does not commence with *al-ḥamdulillah* is in itself deficient (or "cut off" [from blessings])." The intended meaning behind the act being deficient, or cut off from blessings, is in fact a command [*amr*] to precede any act of goodness with the *basmala*.

### *The rules of the basmala*

*Dhī bālin* in the Hadith refers to any act, be it speech or otherwise, that has legally [*shar'an*] been declared lawful [*ḥalāl*]. It is not allowed[17] prior to an act that is prohibited or disliked,[18] a pure remembrance [*dhikr maḥd*], or an act where the Sacred Law indicates other [expressions].

[14] He is Majd al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Mursī. He was a linguist of note and adhered to the school of al-Shāfi'ī.

[15] The revealed Books include:

- The Thora [*Tawrāt*], revealed to the Prophet Mūsā ﷺ.
- The Psalms [*Zabūr*], revealed to the Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ.
- The Gospel [*Injīl*], revealed to the Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ.
- The Qur'an, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

[16] *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* (no. 4840). Imam al-Bājūrī analyses this Hadith in the next few lines.

[17] The ruling of the *basmala* will follow the ruling of the act. If the act is prohibited then the *basmala* is prohibited, and if the act is disliked then the *basmala* is disliked.

[18] Disliked [*makrūh*] is that which if performed, no reward is recorded for the individual performing it, nor is a sin recorded against him.





It is prohibited to use the *basmala* before an act that is inherently prohibited [*muḥarram li-dhātihi*] such as illicit sexual relations [*zinā*], and disliked before an act that is inherently disliked [*makrūh li-dhātihi*] such as looking at the private parts of one's spouse without reason.[19]

It is also prohibited to use the *basmala* before an act that is prohibited due to an external cause [*muḥarram li-'āriḍ*] such as performing ablution [*wuḍū'*] using stolen water.[20]

It is disliked to use the *basmala* before an act that is disliked due to an external cause [*makrūh li-'āriḍ*] such as eating onions and garlic before prayer.[21]

The *basmala* is not necessary in smaller matters such as putting on one's slippers [*libs al-na'l*], spitting [*buṣāq*], or scratching the arm or leg to relieve an itch.[22]

The *basmala* is also omitted from the *dhikr maḥd* such as *lā ilāha illā Allah*, as mentioned earlier, since it is not a Prophetic practice to mention the *basmala* in this case.

[19] This is considered disliked in the school of al-Shāfi'ī, according to a narration of 'Ā'isha ﷺ, as mentioned in the work *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* (vol. 3, p. 134) of al-Shirbīnī. It is, however, permissible according to the school of Imam Mālik to look at the entire body of one's spouse, as mentioned in the work *Ḥāshiya al-Dasūqī 'alā al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr* (vol. 2, p. 215).

[20] Although ablution [*wuḍū'*] is a lawful and praiseworthy act, stealing water is prohibited. Therefore, using this stolen water to perform *wuḍū'* is also prohibited. This is what Imam al-Bājūrī means by *muḥarram li-'āriḍ*. For this reason, it also becomes prohibited to use the *basmala* before performing the ablution with stolen water, while it is lawful to use the *basmala* before performing the ablution in general.

[21] The *basmala* is permissible and recommended here due to the onion being permissible to eat. It becomes disliked, for example, if one is about to go to the mosque and pray, according a Prophetic tradition. It is related that 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Anas was asked: 'What did you hear the Prophet ﷺ say about garlic?' He answered: 'Whoever eats it should not come near our mosque.'" It becomes disliked in this situation and the *basmala* takes the same ruling of the act as explained earlier.

[22] However, there is no harm in mentioning the *basmala* before these minor acts.

[However,] it is sunna to mention the basmala before reading the Qur'an, and this [as a whole] is not considered *dhikr mahd*[23] due to it containing additional information about past nations, the Hereafter, contracts, promises, threats, and so forth. It should not be uttered before an act where the Sacred Law indicates other [expressions], such ■ the five daily prayers. In the case of prayer [*ṣalāt*], it begins with *takbīr* [*Allahu Akbar*] and not with the *basmala*.

Some might object and find ■ contradiction between the two narrations mentioned due to the fact that one cannot act upon both, i.e., to say the *basmala* and the *hamdala* before the act, simultaneously. Many answers were provided to this particular question, the most well known of them states:

Initiating an act is of two types, *ḥaqīqī* and *idāfī*. As for the first [*ḥaqīqī*], this is the actual beginning before the intended act [*amām al-maqṣūd*] without anything preceding the act. As for the second [*idāfī*], this is a starting point before the intended act even though something may have preceded it. There is a general aspect [*'umūm*] as well as a specific distinction [*khuṣūṣ al-muṭlaq*] between the two Hadith.

The Hadith that includes the basmala is of the *ḥaqīqī* type, while the second Hadith, which mentions the *ḥamdala*, is of the *idāfī* type.[24] We have not mentioned it the other way around [*ya'kisu*] as this would oppose the methodology of the Qur'an as well as the consensus [*ijmā'*] of the scholars.

[23] A pure *dhikr* is any form of remembrance that the Prophet ﷺ taught his Companions and which they, in turn, passed on. These include *Hasbunā Allah wa-ni ma al-wakīl*, *Subhān Allah wal-hamdulillah*, *Lā ilāha illā Allah*, *Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā billah*, and the likes. The *basmala* need not be mentioned before these pure remembrances.

[24] There is no contradiction here as the *basmala* ■ the true beginning [*ibtidā al-ḥaqīqī*] while the *hamdala* is the beginning connected to [*ibtidā al-idāfī*], and is preceded by the *basmala*. In this way, the *ḥamdala* remains ■ starting point.





*Using the basmala in poetry*

One should not say that this text [*mu'allaf*] [the *Jawhara*] is not included among the various styles of poetry. If it is accepted as a form of poetry, is it then permissible to commence with the *basmala* and associate it with poetry? Some scholars have said that poetry should not commence with the *basmala*. We say that the poetry that should not commence with the *basmala* ■ the prohibited kind, which includes insults or the defaming of someone's character [*hajū*], for example. The *basmala* should also not precede any poetry that is considered detested, such ■ a man longing and yearning [*taghazzul*] for a woman who might not be lawful for him.

As for poetry that is directly linked to the various sciences of Islam, such as this particular one, to commence it with the *basmala* is a praiseworthy act—as was the preferred way of Imam al-Shāṭibī[25] when he said:

بَدَأْتُ بِبِسْمِ اللهِ فِي النَّظْمِ أَوَّلاَ

*I begin this text firstly, in the name of Allah*[26]

Imam al-Laqānī did not include *basmala* in the poem itself as Imam al-Shāṭibī did. The reason is that this goes against the preferred method [*khilāf al-awlā*], which is to exclude the *basmala* from the text of any form of poetry itself.[27]

[25] Imam al-Shāṭibī includes the *basmala* in the opening verse as a part of his poem. It is a poem of fourteen hundred and forty-four verses, each ending with the letter *lām*.

[26] From a classical poem on the science of the seven readings of the Qur'an titled *Hirz al-Amāni wa-Wajh al-Tahāni*, composed by Imam Abū al-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī al-Ḍarīr ('the blind'), also known as the *Shāṭibiyya*.

[27] Imam al-Bayhaqī relates in *al-Madkhal*, and al-Zarkashī in *al-Tadhkira*, on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd, that Layth b. Sa'd said: "The people of knowledge [*'ulamā'*] are the people of flexibility [*tawsi'a*]. Those who issue *fatwas* never cease to differ; this one permits something while that one forbids it, but without one finding fault with the other when he knows of his position."

### *The letter bā' in the basmala*

Know that the letter *bā'* in the *basmala* indicates one of two meanings. The first is 'by or with' [*ma'a*], seeking the grace and blessings of Allah [*alā wajh al-tabarruk*], meaning: 'by or with the grace and blessings of the name of Allah.'

The second is seeking the aid of Allah [*isti'āna*], meaning: 'I seek assistance with the name of Allah.' The *bā'* used in this manner is usually associated with an assistant, meaning that one needs something to assist him in completing a particular act. There is no fault in seeking assistance through the name of Allah;[28] likewise, there is no fault in seeking assistance through His Essence [*bi-Dhātihi*]. The best is to use the *basmala* as indicated in the first meaning: 'by or with the grace and blessings of the name of Allah.'

### *Some of the subtleties regarding the letter bā'*

The deeper meaning [*ma'nā al-ishārī*] of the *bā'* is that everything that was, was only by and through Allah [*bi-kāna mā kāna*], and everything that is, is only by and through Allah [*bi-yakūnu mā yakūnu*]. In this letter bā there is a subtle indication of it encompassing the entirety of beliefs [*jamī' al-'aqā'id*]. Furthermore, it is as if Allah ﷻ is saying: 'Whatever existed, existed only through Me [*bi-wujūdi mā wujida*] and whatever exists, exists only through Me [*bi-yūjadu mā yūjadu*].' Nothing is like this except the One Who is described with the attributes of perfection [*ṣifāt al-kamāl*], and Who is free from the attributes of deficiency [*ṣifāt al-naqṣān*], as mentioned by some of the Imams of Qur'anic exegesis.

Al-Bayhaqī and al-Zarkashi also narrated that Qatāda said: "'Umar b. Abd al-Azīz used to say: 'It would not please me more if the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ did not differ amongst themselves, for had they not differed, there would be no leeway (for us).'" (Shaykh Gibril Fouad Haddad, *Madhhab Differences in Islam*)

[28] Seeking a means through one of the Divine names is referred to as *tawassul*, as mentioned earlier.





### *The word ism*

According to the grammarians of Basra, the word *ism* is derived from the word *sumuw*, which means elevation [*uluww*], since a name brings about highness or elevation to the named. As for the grammarians of Kūfa, they prefer the root *wasama*[29] ('to symbolize'). In this case, it refers to any symbol that indicates the named. What is known, or confirmed, is that the name [*ism*] is other than the named [*musammā*].[30]

### *The name Allah*

The word 'Allah' is a proper noun ['*alam*] denoting the Essence (which is) the Necessary Existent [*Wājib al-wujūd*]: the One deserving of all perfections, Who is transcendent above all deficiencies."

When we say that Allah is *Wājib al-wujūd*, we are alluding to what lies beyond the Divine name [*ta'yīn lil-musammā*]. We do not intend by *Wājib al-wujūd* an attribute that is a part of Allah, as this would imply that He ﷻ consists of parts.[31]

The name 'Allah' is a distinctive and personal proper name [*'alam shakhsī*] with a meaning indicating that which we see established all around us.[32]

The intended meaning is not that Allah be attributed with qualities such as whiteness [*bayāḍ*] and length [*ṭūl*] and so forth, as this is impossible for Him ﷻ.

[29] *Wasama* is a past tense verb [*fi'l mādī*].

[30] The name is a word that indicates, whereas the named is the thing indicated. See the work *al-Maqṣid al-Asnā fi Sharh Asmā' Allah al-Husnā* by Imam Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī for a lengthy and beneficial discussion on the name, the named, and naming.

[31] This is the view of the *Mujassima*, a sect who staunchly believe that Allah consists of limbs such as a hand, eyes, and so forth.

[32] The entire creation is an indication of an All-Knowing, All-Powerful Creator.

It is also not permissible to speak regarding these finer points, except in the appropriate places of learning [*maqām al-ta'līm*], as in them lies doubt, speculation, and delusions for those who lack expertise in this science regarding Allah ﷻ.[33]

What has been discussed here should clarify that the word 'Allah' is not a noun derived from any other word, as is often grammatically the case, like [the word] *ilāh* (god).[34] There are, nonetheless, scholars such as Sībawayh who propose the opposite.

### *The greatest name [al-ism al-a'ẓam]*

The name 'Allah' is the greatest and most comprehensive name.[35] This is according to the majority [*jumhūr*] of scholars. Imam al-Nawawī[36] holds a different opinion, and prefers *al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*, which means 'the Living, the Sustaining.'

The main reason why a supplication [*du'ā'*] (using the greatest name) may not being answered at times, is due to the preconditions of it not being adhered to, the greatest of which is eating lawful food.

[33] The vast majority of scholastic theologians [*mutakallimīn*], including Imam al-Bājūrī, Imam al-Ghazālī, Imam al-Suyūṭī and the like, deem it impermissible [*lā yajūz*] to discuss the intricacies and subtleties of theology [*kalām*] before those who lack expertise in the matter.

[34] The name 'Allah' is not derived from another word according to the preferred view of Imam al-Bājūrī. Grammarians, however, differ on its origin and etymology.

[35] Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, the saint [*walī*] and preserver of the Sunna, was asked: "O Abū Yazīd, share with us the greatest name of Allah," to which he replied: "If you show me His weakest name, then I will show you His greatest name!" Shaykh Abdul Hakim Murad, commenting on the words of Abū Yazīd, said: "There is something just as effective as the greatest name, and that is truthfulness. Any name pronounced with truthfulness is like the greatest name." (*Commentary on the Eleventh Contentions*)

[36] Imam Abū Zakariyyā Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī was born in Nawā, southern Syria, in 631 H., and died there in 676 H. after spending most of his life in Damascus. He is the relied-upon authority [*mu'tamad*] in the *Shāfi'ī* school, such that his positions and statements are given the greatest weight. He died at the age of forty-four years, leaving behind an immense heritage. Some of his numerous works include *al-Arba'ūn al-Nawawiyya*, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Kitāb al-Adhkār*, and *al-Maqāṣid*.





### *The names al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm*

These two attributes [*ṣifatān*] are derived from mercy [*raḥma*] and carry the meaning of excellence [*iḥsān*] or Allah's ﷻ will for excellence [*irāda al-iḥsān*]. *Raḥma* as an attribute of the Divine does not carry its lexical meaning, which is: 'kindness or gentleness in the heart, which is measured out in terms of grace and excellence towards another.'[37] This is impossible for Allah ﷻ since mercy and compassion as Divine attributes are not a feeling in the heart as is experienced by human beings, but mean excellence, or the will for excellence for His creation.

As for *al-Raḥmān*, it denotes 'the Doer of excellence through grandeur and magnificence,' meaning the immense grace and favour upon the entire creation.

As for *al-Raḥīm*, it means the 'the Doer of excellence in the minute graces and favours, which we may see as small or insignificant.' There is often [*ghālib*] an increase in meaning [*ziyāda al-ma'nā*] when there is an increase in structure [*ziyāda al-mabnā*].[38]

Allah ﷻ connected the two [*al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm*] as an indication of the necessity in seeking from Him the smaller blessings [*ni'am ḥaqīra*] as well the necessity in seeking from Him ﷻ the greater blessings [*ni'am 'aẓīma*] because everything, ultimately, comes from the One ﷻ. Those things that are connected to and associated with the *basmala* are boundless, and will prolong us here should we mention all of them.

[37] This is how the concept of mercy is understood in relation to the creation, and not in relation to the Creator.

[38] The names *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm* are in the intensified form, which indicates their vastness, expansive nature, and radiance. In a well-known Hadith, narrated by Imam Aḥmad, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah ﷻ has one hundred mercies. With [just] one of them, the creation shows mercy to each other; even the beasts show kindness to their offspring. He has kept ninety-nine mercies with Him for the Day of Judgement."

## VERSE 1

الحَمْدُ للهِ عَلَى صِلاَتِهِ ثُمَّ سَلاَمُ اللهِ مَعْ صَلاَتِهِ

*All praise is due to Allah for His favours,*
*Followed by the salutations of Allah and His prayers*

الحَمْدُ للهِ

*All praise is due to Allah*

### 1.1 *The praiseworthiness of commencing with the ḥamdala*

Imam al-Nawawī ﷺ said:

> It is recommended [*mustaḥabb*] for the author to commence his book with praising [*ḥamd*] Allah. It is also recommended prior to the teacher reading a lesson to the student, and prior to the student reading to the teacher. In addition, it is recommended to commence circles of Qur'anic recitation, Prophetic narrations, Islamic jurisprudence, and related fields of study with the *ḥamdala*. The best way to praise Allah ﷻ is to say: Al-*ḥamdulillahi rabb al-'ālamīn* ('all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.')[39]

### 1.2 *The letter wāw*

The noble author did not commence the poem with the conjunction 'and' [wāw], which would read: 'And all praise is due to Allah...'

[39] Imam al-Juwaynī, in his work *al-Waraqāt fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, did not commence with the *ḥamdala*, as he was content with using only the *basmala*. Many scholars hold the view that the *basmala* encompasses the *ḥamdala*.





This means that his aim was to commence with both the *basmala* and the *ḥamdala* and not with only one of the two.[40] Another possibility for the noble author omitting the *wāw* is because one of them could be a statement [*khabariyya*] and the other a command, question, or request [*inshā'iyya*]. The *wāw* is not used in this manner in the Arabic language.[41]

The strongest opinion according to the grammarians is that the *wāw* cannot be used to join the *khabar* with an *inshā'*, nor can it be used to join the *inshā'* with the *khabar*.[42]

### 1.3 *Praise* [*ḥamd*]

The lexical meaning [*lughatan*] of *ḥamd* is: to verbally praise someone for a virtuous act, carried out through free will, by way of reverencing and lauding the doer of the action, whether the one being praised did any favour upon the one praising or not [*thanā' bil-kalām 'alā al-jamīl al-ikhtiyārī 'alā jiha al-tabjīl wal-ta'ẓīm, sawā' kāna fi muqābila ni'ma am lā*].

[40] The letter *wāw*, being a *ḥarf al-'aṭf*, could serve as precedence of order indicating that the *basmala* is first and the *ḥamdala* second. The *ḥarf al-'aṭf*, in the relevant Qur'anic verse, was sufficient for Imam al-Shāfi'ī to declare a specific order [*tartīb*] in the ritual ablution [*wuḍū'*]. This was not the intent of the noble author according to Imam al-Bājūrī. See: *The rules of the basmala* on p. 46-48.

[41] The *basmala* could be a statement with the meaning: 'in the name of Allah.' or it could be a command with the meaning: 'commence in the name of Allah;' while the *ḥamdala* could be a command with the meaning: 'praise Allah.' If one is a statement [*khabar*] and the other an imperative or interrogative [*inshā'*], then the wāw cannot be used to join them.

[42] *Khabar* lexically means information, but it is described by Arabic rhetoricians as a statement that is possible to be proven true or false. *Inshā'* lexically means origination, but it is described by Arabic rhetoricians as an origination sentence in which falsehood or truthfulness cannot be proven, because the action will manifest after the speech has been uttered. *Inshā'* is of two types: *inshā' ṭalabī* and *inshā' ghayr ṭalabī*. *Inshā' ṭalabī* contains a request. An example would be the command or request: 'do not run!' *Inshā' ghayr ṭalabī* does not contain a request. An example would be: 'how beautiful is her scarf!'

The first example is when Zayd shows generosity to someone, we praise Zayd by saying: "Zayd is generous." This is *ḥamd* in response to a favour. The second example sees Zayd perfecting his prayer. We then praise Zayd by saying: "Zayd excels in piety." This is an example of *ḥamd* without a favour from Zayd towards anyone.

### 1.4 *The meaning of the word thanā'*

As for the word *thanā'* in the definition [of *ḥamd*], with the letter *thā* preceding the *nūn*, it is used to make manifest [*iẓyān*] by means of an indication, the greatness or importance of something or someone. If the letter *nūn* precedes the *thā'* ■ the word, the reading would be *nathā*, and this is the opposite of praise.

When we use the *ḥamd* as mentioned earlier [*al-ḥamdulillahi rabb al-ālamīn*], then, according to the scholars of truth, we are including the pre-eternal praise [*al-ḥamd al-qadīm*], and this is how Allah praises Himself by Himself [*nafsahu bi-nafsihi*]; it is how He praises His Prophets [*anbiyā'*], His saints [*awliyā'*] and those of purity [*aṣfiyā'*]. Thus, *ḥamd* can be from Allah ﷻ upon Himself, or upon His Prophets, in which case it is pre-eternal speech; or it can be created speech, such ■ the creation praising Allah, or the creation praising the creation.

Scholars generally mention four types [*aqsām*] of *ḥamd*:

- The praise of the Creator upon Himself
  [*ḥamd qadīm li-qadīm*]
- The praise of the Creator upon the creation
  [*ḥamd qadīm li-ḥādith*]
- The praise of the creation upon the Creator
  [*ḥamd ḥādith li-qadīm*]
- And the praise of the creation upon the creation
  [*ḥamd ḥādith li-ḥādith*]





Some scholars have given the definition of *ḥamd* as 'praising with the tongue' [*thanā' bil-lisān*], which is problematic when referring to Allah's praise.[43] This definition is satisfactory if, by 'tongue,' 'speech' is intended, using the word 'tongue' as a metaphor [*majāz*]. Using the word 'tongue' with the intended meaning of speech is referred to as *majāz mursal*. In this type of *majāz*, the cause [*sabab*], which is the tongue [*lisān*], is used to intend the effect [*musabbab*], which is speech [*kalām*]. This type of metaphor is well known to both the Arabic and non-Arabic speaking person.

As for instantly praising something that is not in response to an act done through choice: this is called *madḥ*, and not *ḥamd*. An example is when we see the beauty of a pearl. Our praising of the pearl would be *madḥ* as it is not in response to ■ act done through choice. However, according to al-Zamakhsharī,[44] *ḥamd* and *madḥ* are used synonymously, and there is no difference between the two.

### 1.5 *The theological definition of ḥamd*

*Ḥamd* is an action [*fi'l*][45] indicating the greatness [*ta'ẓīm*] of the Bestower of blessings [*al-Mun'im*], whether the favour is towards the one praising or not, and whether the praise [*ḥamd*] is from the tongue, heart or limbs.[46]

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[43] This would imply that we attribute a tongue to Allah, which is a very vile innovation, something that is completely rejected by *Ahl al-Sunna*.

[44] Al-Zamakhsharī was born in Zamakhshar, Khwarazm, and was a renowned *Mu'tazilī* scholar. He is best known for *al-Kashāf*, a seminal commentary on the Qur'an. The commentary is famous for its deep linguistic analysis.

[45] An action could be from the heart, such as the feeling of love, or from the mind, such as good thoughts towards another, or from the limbs, such ■ praising with the tongue. The technical meaning of *ḥamd* has a broader reach than its lexical meaning, as it encompasses more than praising with the tongue.

[46] I have mentioned here some of the key points on *ḥamd* from the *Tuḥfa* of Imam al-Bājūrī and will proceed with quotes and extracts from other major works.

عَلَى صِلاَتِهِ

*For His favours*

1.6 *Praise* [*ḥamd*] *and gratitude* [*shukr*]

The technical [*iṣṭilāḥan*] meaning of *shukr* is: 'to use that which Allah has given you for what it was created for.' *Ḥamd* also carries the meaning of contentment [*riḍā*] and has a more general and inclusive meaning than that of gratitude, because it encompasses both *shukr* and *ḥamd*. Similarly, *shukr* is only expressed as a response to a favour, whereas *ḥamd* is expressed both ▬ a response to a favour, as well as a spontaneous action of *dhikr*. It is in this respect that Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said: "*Al-ḥamdulillah* is the statement of those who are grateful [*shākirīn*]."

It is due to its comprehensive nature that we find the Prophets showing gratitude to Allah using *ḥamd*. Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ said: ﴿*"All praise is due to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ismā'il and Isḥāq."*﴾ [14:39] Allah commanded Prophet Nūḥ ﷺ, saying: ﴿*Say: "All praise is due to Allah, Who saved us from an oppressive people."*﴾ [23:28] And Allah commanded our master Muḥammad ﷺ, saying: ﴿*Say: "All praise is due to Allah, Who has not begotten a son."*﴾ [17:111]

Some scholars have said that *shukr* is more encompassing than *ḥamd*, since praise is expressed by the tongue, whereas gratitude can be expressed by the tongue, as well as within the heart and through the limbs. Expressing gratitude with one's tongue is by praising the Bestower of blessings. Expressing gratitude through one's limbs is done by acting in obedience to Him and by abandoning acts of disobedience. Expressing gratitude within one's heart is done by recognising the magnitude of the blessing, and knowing that it has been given by the grace of Allah ﷻ—and not by the servant's hand.

Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī ﷺ narrates that the pious said: "*Ḥamd* is for the very breaths we breathe, while *shukr* is for the blessings of the senses." In a sound tradition, it is said: "The first of those invited to enter the garden of Paradise will be those who are constantly praising Allah."





*Ḥamd*, adds the Sayyid, is for what Allah ﷻ has prevented, while *shukr* is for what Allah has brought into existence.[47]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the noble author first praised the Divine Essence [*al-Dhāt*], and then [praised Him] for His Divine favours [*ṣilātihi*]. The word *ṣilāt* is the plural of *ṣila*, meaning a gift or the act of giving. Imam al-Bājūrī prefers the second meaning, because the act of giving encompasses the gift as well.

The noble author said that *ḥamd* is due to Allah because of His favours [*ṣilātihi*], mentioning *ḥamd* before mentioning Allah's favours. This is commensurate with the arrangement of verses in the Qur'an, as Allah ﷻ says in *Sūra al-Fātiḥa*, first mentioning *ḥamd*: ﴿*All praise is due to Allah.*﴾ followed by the sincere request to be on the path of His favours: ﴿*The path of those whom Allah has bestowed of His favours.*﴾

1.7 *The noble author mentions salutations* [*salām*] *before prayers* [*ṣalāt*]

The noble author mentions salutations before prayers with the intent of maintaining the rhythm of the poem. The positioning of the words *ṣilātihi* (His favours) and *ṣalātihi* (His prayers) indicates the natural brilliance of Imam al-Laqāni in the composition of the text. He could easily have mentioned *ṣalātihi* first and *salām* second, leaving the poem with less rhythm, yet with immense meaning. Some might disagree with the order of the wording, that is, salutations [*salām*] before prayers [*ṣalāt*], since Allah ﷻ mentions *ṣalāt* before *salām* in the Qur'an: ﴿*O you who believe, send your prayers and salutations upon him.*﴾ [33:56]

Imam al-Bājūrī aptly responds, saying that there is in fact no problem mentioning *salām* before *ṣalāt* since the noble author uses the word *ma'a* (with), indicating that *salām*, here, is [in fact] following *ṣalāt*. What follows is called the *tābi'* while what is followed is called the *matbū'*.

The one followed is naturally more elevated and honoured, as when one says, the girl came with her mother, or the boy came with his father, ▬ the soldiers came with their king. Here, the mother, father, and king are followed, indicating their status.

[47] *Al-Ghunya*, Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

With this understanding, Imam al-Laqānī added *salām* before *ṣalāt*, thus maintaining the rhythm of the poem, and still elevating each word in the Qur'an.

ثُمَّ سَلَامُ اللهِ مَعْ صَلَاتِهِ

*Followed by the salutations of Allah and His prayers*

Imam al-Laqānī uses the word *thumma* (then), indicating that praise [*hamd*] is firstly due to Allah ﷻ, followed by *ṣalāt* and *salām* on the Prophet ﷺ, which is the necessary method of praise and salutations ■ mentioned in the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. This means that the Creator is praised before the best of creation ﷺ, as already mentioned.

### 1.8 *A deeper look at ṣalāt and salām*

*Salām* in this verse means salutations that are most suitable for the Prophet ﷺ, and these are the salutations of Allah ﷻ. For this reason, the noble author mentions *'the salutations of Allah'* and not only salutations, which could mean the salutations of anyone. We are required to send the Prophet ﷺ the highest and grandest of salutations, as he is most noble of creation [*ashraf al-makhlūqāt*]. There are no higher salutations than that of the Creator, and here we see the noble author's intent, which is to elevate and praise the best of creation ﷺ ■ the most dignified and noble manner.[48]

Some scholars are of the opinion that *salām* was a conversation that took place between Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ during the Ascent [*mi'rāj*]. *Salām* is, then, the salutations that took place beyond time and place, in a locus that not even the angel Jibrīl ﷺ could traverse. *Salām* could also refer to one of the ninety-nine names of Allah ﷻ, as *al-Salām* means 'the One Whose Essence is free from imperfection.'[49]

[48] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 1)

[49] This is the definition as given by Imam al-Ghazālī in his *Maqṣid al-Asnā Sharḥ Asmā Allah al-Ḥusnā*.





Anas ﷺ relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "*Al-Salām* is one of the names of Allah ﷻ, which Allah has placed in the earth. Therefore, give salutations amongst yourselves."[50]

If we read it as one of the names of Allah, then it means: 'And the perfection and excellence of the name of Allah, *al-Salām*, upon the Prophet ﷺ.'

Verily, the Prophet ﷺ is the perfection of peace and security from amongst the creation. In a Hadith, we find the Prophet ﷺ ordering that *salām* be spread across the land. The Prophet ﷺ said: "By He in Whose hand is my soul! You will never enter Paradise until you believe, and you will never believe [*lā tu'minū*] until you love each other [*ḥattā taḥābbū*]. Should I direct you towards something that would direct you towards loving each other? Spread salām amongst yourselves."

*Ṣalāt* is defined as Allah's intense, extensive mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ. This verse is connected to the next verse, as the salutations, praises and prayers from Allah are for the best of Creation ﷺ.

## VERSE 2

عَلَى نَبِيٍّ جَاءَ بِالتَّوْحِيدِ وَقَدْ عَرَى الدِّينُ عَنِ التَّوْحِيدِ

*Upon a Prophet who came with belief in oneness,*
*When religion was bereft of belief in oneness*

عَلَى نَبِيٍّ

*Upon a Prophet*

### 2.1 *The lexical meaning of the word nabī*

The word *nabī* is derived from *naba'a*, which means 'to bring news' [*khabar*] to a people, since he is the one who informs [*mukhbir*], with a *kasra* (i) on the letter *bā*, and thus informs us

[50] Imam al-Bukhārī, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (no. 989)

[*yukhbirunā*] about the Sacred Law from Allah ﷻ, whether he is a Prophet [*nabī*] or a Messenger [*rasūl*]. If he is only a *nabī*, then he informs us so that the Sacred Law may be respected and honoured through him. A Prophet is also the one who is informed [*mukhbar*]—with a *fatha* on the *bā*'—since the angel Jibrīl informs him of his Lord. It is also said to be derived from *nabwa*, which means 'elevation' [*rif'a*], since he is raised in status, and there is no *nabī* except that he is the best [*afḍal*] of his nation [*umma*]. A *nabī*, in addition to being an elevated personality, elevates those who follow him.

Imam al-Laqānī used the word *nabī* instead of *rasūl*, emphasizing the crucial role and position that the Prophet ﷺ personally holds, and indicating that the Prophet ﷺ is rightfully deserving of prayers and salutations as a *nabī*, just as he is rightfully deserving of prayers and salutations ■ ■ *rasūl*.

The word *nabī* ■ used here is in harmony with the Qur'an, ■ Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, Allah and His angels send salutations upon the nabī.*﴾ [33:56]

### 2.2 *The definition of 'Prophet' [nabī] and 'Messenger' [rasūl]*

A *nabī* is defined ■ a human being [*insān*], who is male [*dhakar*],[51] free [*ḥurr*], from amongst the offspring of Adam, free from any repulsive features [*salīm an munaffir*], inspired with a Sacred Law, which he practices, even if he was not commanded to convey it [*tablīgh*].

Imam al-Laqānī defines a Messenger with the same attributes ■ a Prophet, except that he is commanded to convey the message. Every Messenger is therefore a Prophet—but not every Prophet is necessarily a Messenger.

[51] Excluded from males are females. However, a number of scholars were of the opinion that females are also chosen as Prophets. Some of these scholars who considered the mothers of the Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā ﷺ to be Prophetesses include Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Imam al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Ḥazm.





Some consider Messengers to be more universal, since there are Messengers from amongst the angels ■ well.[52]

Imam al-Taftāzānī said that a *nabī* and a *rasūl* are one and the same.[53] Another view is that between them there is a generality and specificity, since a *nabī* receives revelation of a Sacred Law that is specifically for him, and which he practices. A *rasūl*, on the other hand, receives revelation of a Sacred Law that he practices and teaches to others, while nothing in it is specific to him. If some of it is specific to him, and some of it is taught by him, then he is a *nabī* and a *rasūl*.

Some scholars have said that the Prophethood of our master Muḥammad ﷺ was established when Allah ﷻ revealed: ﴿*Read, in the name of your Lord,*﴾ and the confirmation of him as a Messenger when Allah revealed: ﴿*O you wrapped (in your garment), arise and warn!*﴾ [96:1 and 74:1-2]

### 2.3 *The number of Prophets and Messengers*

There are differences of opinion regarding the number of Prophets [*anbiyā'*]. Some say that they are one hundred and twenty-four thousand in number, while others say that they are two hundred and twenty-four thousand. There are also differences of opinion regarding the number of Messengers. Some say they are three hundred and thirteen in number, while others say that they are three hundred and fourteen, and yet another group that they are three hundred and fifteen. The correct opinion is that we do not know the exact number of Messengers, ■ Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, We have sent Messengers before you; of some of them We have related to you their story; and of some, We have not related to you their story.*﴾ [40:78]

[52] Angels are Messengers [*rusul*] in the sense that they convey the message from their Lord to the Prophets and Messengers.

[53] Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd b. 'Umar b. 'Abdullah was born in Taftāzān, a village in Khorasan, in 722 H., and is said to have been a student of al-Ījī. He ■ best known for his commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya* by Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī, which for centuries was one of the principal textbooks of theology.

جَاءَ بِالتَّوْحِيد

*Who came with belief in oneness*

This part of the verse until the end is an attribute [*ṣifa*] for the word *nabī*. This is in accordance with the principle [*qā'ida*]: "Sentences [*jumal*] following an indefinite noun [*nakira*] are attributes [*ṣifāt*]."

The noble author restricted [*qayyad*] this sentence when he stated further on, "*when religion was bereft of belief in oneness* [*tawḥīd*]," which ■ called the condition or state [*ḥāl*]. This state restricts the attribute [*ṣifa*] to our *nabī* ﷺ, because no Prophet came with *tawḥīd* during a time when religion was completely bereft of *tawḥīd*, except our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The intended meaning of 'coming' [*jā'*] is in fact 'sending' [*irsāl*]. This is known as 'explanation by the cause' [*tafsīr bil-sabab*], where sending is in fact the cause [*sabab*] of the coming [*majī'*]. The Prophet ﷺ did not come of his own accord, but rather, was sent by Allah ﷻ.

### 2.4 *The lexical meaning of the word 'oneness' [tawḥīd]*

*Tawḥīd*, as the verbal noun of the second form of the verb [*waḥada*], means 'to declare or judge something as one.' Imam al-Bājūrī said: "It is to know that something is one [*al-'ilm bi-anna al-shay' wāḥid*]."

### 2.5 *The definition of tawḥīd according to the sharī'a*

According to Imam al-Bājūrī, the definition of *tawḥīd* ■ the *sharī'a*[54] is: "the knowledge ['*ilm*] that makes it possible for the student to demonstrate and derive the basic religious beliefs [*'aqā'id dīniyya*], which are acquired [*muktasab*] from certain rational proofs [*adilla al-yaqīniyya*]."

■ The word *sharī'a* is derived from the word *sharra'a* (to legislate). It is a composite term that refers to all the legal, ethical, creedal, and spiritual teachings revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.





### 2.6 *The definition of tawḥīd specific to this craft*

Junayd al-Baghdādī[55] ﷺ defines *tawḥīd* as: "the true belief in oneness, separating pre-eternality [*qidam*] from contingencies [*ḥawādith*]."

Imam al-Bājūrī defines *tawḥīd* as: "the singular worship of the One Worshipped [*ifrād al-ma'būd bil-'ibāda*], with true conviction and complete belief [*ma'a i'tiqād wal-taṣdīq*] in His oneness [*waḥdatihi*] and the perfection of His Essence [*Dhāt*], attributes [*ṣifāt*] and actions [*af'āl*]."

The definition of Imam al-Bājūrī has two fundamental dimensions: an outer dimension of prescribed actions, such as the prostration [*sujūd*] and bowing [*rukū'*] in the prescribed daily prayers [*ṣalāt*]; and an inner dimension of belief in the perfection of the One Worshipped.[56]

It is crucial that these two aspects of worship be taken together because they can be separated only at the price of making a grave mistake. *Sujūd*, for example, cannot be regarded as worship ■ itself, because Allah Himself would be guilty of ordering the angels [*malā'ika*] to commit acts of polytheism [*shirk*] when He ordered them to prostrate before Adam ﷺ. The greater majority of commentators say that the *sujūd* of the angels was out of respect, and that to perform *sujūd* as ■ sign of respect and reverence was abrogated in the *sharī'a* that our master [Sayyidunā] Muḥammad ﷺ came with.

Hence, worship ['*ibāda*] is all the words, actions, and states of the worshipper carried out in complete humility and servitude to the one whom he believes possesses Divinity [*ulūhiyya*] and Lordship [*rubūbiyya*].

[55] He is Junayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Junayd Abū al-Qāsim al-Qawārīrī al-Khazzāz al-Nahāwandī al-Baghdādī. Junayd al-Baghdādī died ■ 298 H. and was the Imam of his time, the Shaykh of the Sufis and 'the diadem of the Gnostics.' He studied *fiqh* under Abū Thawr—in whose circle he would issue *fatwas* at twenty years of age. His spiritual master was Sarī al-Saqaṭī, his uncle and the Sufi master of Baghdad. Sarī al-Saqaṭī was a student of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, a Persian Christian who embraced Islam to become a fountainhead of spirituality.

[56] *Sharh al-Bājūrī* (verse 2)

*Ulūhiyya* is an abstract noun derived from the Arabic word *ilāh* (god). According to Imam al-Sanūsī,[57] *ilāh* is a being who is absolutely independent, and whom everything else depends on. Others define *ilāh* as that which alone is worthy of worship, and that which alone must be completely obeyed. *Rubūbiyya* is derived from the Arabic word *Rabb*, which means 'Owner, Lord, Protector and Nourisher.'

To summarize, we said that worship involves actions carried out in a certain way with complete servitude and belief in the *ulūhiyya* and the *rubūbiyya* of the One Worshipped. *Tawhīd*, therefore, ■ the definition of al-Bājūrī indicates, means recognizing and firmly believing that Allah alone has the attributes of *ulūhiyya* and *rubūbiyya* and consequently, Allah alone ought to be worshipped. *Ibāda* in terms of the Sacred Law ■ mainly used to refer to the five pillars of Islam—namely the testimony of faith [*shahāda*],[58] the prescribed daily prayers [*ṣalāt*], fasting [*siyām*], compulsory annual alms [*zakāt*] and Hajj—as well as to the inner states such as fear [*khawf*], hope [*rajā'*], and reliance [*tawakkul*].

*Tawhīd*, defined in this way, is then the prime concept and motivating force, that which directs acts of worship and the inner states to their correct and only true object of worship, Allah ﷻ, the Lord of the worlds.[59]

### 2.7 *The definition of creed* ['*aqīda*]

The word *'aqīda* comes from the Arabic root *'aqd*, which means 'to bind in a knot,' or to ratify a contract or sale. In Arabic, using *'aqada* with ■ rope means that the rope is tied firmly, while using *'aqada* with a sale means that the sale has been approved by

[57] Imam al-Sanūsī, the author of *Umm al-Barāhīn*, was born in Tlemcen, Algeria, and died in 895 H. Trained ■ the traditional Islamic sciences, he acquired a reputation as a precocious scholar and eminent Sufi. He was particularly famed for his works on creed, which were written at various grades of elucidation.

[58] The two testimonies of faith [*shahādatayn*] consist of bearing witness that 'there is no god but Allah' [*lā ilāha illā Allah*] and that 'Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah' [*Muḥammad rasūl Allah*].

[59] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*





contract or agreement. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an: (*As for those with whom your right hand has made a covenant* [*aqadat*], *give them their due.*) [4:33]

The meaning of *'aqīda* according to the *sharīa* is true conviction with firm resolve [*tasdīq al-jazm*] which ■ in conformity with reality [*muṭābiq lil-wāqi'*], and which is obtained through definitive proof [*dalīl qaṭ'ī*].[60]

### 2.8 *The importance of 'aqīda*

The human being consists mainly of instincts, emotions, will, reason, and spiritual intuition. He falls below the level of the animal if he is controlled by his basic instincts. On the other hand, if his behaviour is guided by reason, he is capable of rising to high levels and achieving great things. In daily social situations, we witness the powerful impact of the attitudes and beliefs of a person on his behaviour. For example, if someone believes that fire burns and is painful, he would stay clear from its flames. In a similar way, we distance ourselves from anything we believe to be harmful or detestable. Should we have reason to believe that a certain food contains ■ poisonous substance, we would distance ourselves from it and not eat it.

The beliefs we hold, are therefore of fundamental importance, meriting careful treatment and close attention. In the process of building up a Muslim's faith [*īmān*], the prescribed set of attitudes and beliefs taught by Islam become entrenched in a person's consciousness to the extent that they deeply affect his whole personality. This means that a Muslim's disposition may be said to reflect the degree to which his faith in Allah ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ and the Day of Judgement has taken root in his soul. This partially explains why the Prophet ﷺ, and indeed the Qur'an, afforded particular attention to theological questions during the first twelve years of Islam.[61]

[60] Al-Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rīfāt*; cf. Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*

[61] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*

### 2.9 *The types of tawḥīd*

*Tawḥīd*, according the scholars, has come to denote the branch of knowledge that deals with the creed of Islam in a systematic way. In order to distinguish between the academic study of this science and its practice or realisation, some scholars divide *tawḥīd* into two kinds:

- General *tawḥīd* [*ʿām*]

This refers to having knowledge of Allah ﷻ, His attributes, the attributes of Prophethood, the Prophets themselves, and other important guiding principles. This is the *tawḥīd* discussed in this particular work.

- Specific *tawḥīd* [*khāṣṣ*]

This refers to the station of the spiritual traveller, who after years of practicing the methodology of Sufism [*taṣawwuf*],[61] realises the belief of *tawḥīd ʿām*, which for him become a living reality. He worships Allah ﷻ as if he sees Him (as opposed to only Allah ﷻ seeing him).[62] The veils between him and the Divine are lifted, and he realises a higher degree of certainty in the pillars [*arkān*] of faith than the average person does.[63]

Imam al-Bājūrī quotes Imam al-Ghazālī as saying: "Know that the spiritual union for the one who reaches a state of pure certitude by means of spiritual 'taste' and 'ecstasy' has a mark of arrival." Arrival, according to the Sufis, is the attaining of the level of *tawḥīd khāṣṣ*.

[61] Nearly two thousand meanings have been used to define, illustrate, and explain Sufism. The source of all these definitions is turning to Allah ﷻ with a sincere heart. (Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq, *Qawāʿid al-Taṣawwuf*, principle no. 4)

[62] This is reflected in the Hadith of Jibrīl, which explains the three primary degrees of the religion: Islam, *īmān* and *iḥsān*. Jibrīl ﷺ related to the Prophet ﷺ that the Muslim should worship Allah ﷻ if he sees Him, and if he is incapable of this, to know that Allah sees him. *Iḥsān* is the worshipper's degree of certitude.

[63] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*





### 2.10 *Why imam al-Laqānī confined himself to the word tawḥīd*

Imam al-Bājūrī provides two reasons:

- The noble author began with this word in order to make clear his intent (which is to speak about *tawḥīd*), and so that the reader may connect with this intended purpose.
- If it is said that the Prophet ﷺ came with more than *tawḥīd*, why then did the noble author confine himself to the word *tawḥīd* in the poem? The reason is because it is the most noble form of worship, followed by the prescribed daily prayers [*ṣalāt*], as is narrated in a Hadith by Abī Saʿīd ﷺ: "Verily, Allah made nothing obligatory that is better than belief in His oneness and the prescribed daily prayers; had He made anything better, it would have been obligatory upon the angels, some of them who remain bowing [*rukūʿ*] and others who remain in prostration [*sujūd*]."

### 2.11 *The ten principles of every craft*

A poet composed the following:

إن مبادِي كلِّ فنٍّ عشرة ... الحدُّ والموضوعُ ثم الثمرة

وفضلُهُ ونسبةٌ والواضع ... والاسمُ لاستمدادُ حكمُ الشارعُ

مسائلٌ والبعضُ بالبعضِ اكتفى ... ومن درى الجميعَ حازَ الشرفا

*Verily, the principles of every craft are ten,*
*The definition and the subject matter, followed by its fruit*
*Its virtue, its relation (to other sciences), and its founder,*
*Its name, its proof, and its legal ruling*
*(And) its main topics, some were content with (knowing) only some,*
*While the one who encompasses all has attained nobility*

Imam al-Bājūrī provides a definition for each of the ten principles [*mabādī' al- ashra*][65] according to the study of *tawḥīd*.

1. The definition [*ḥadd*] is as we have mentioned earlier: "the singular worship of the One Worshipped, with true conviction and complete belief ■ His oneness and the perfection of His Essence [*Dhāt*], attributes [*ṣifāt*] and actions [*af'āl*]."
2. The subject matter [*mawḍū'*] is the study of the Essence of Allah and encompasses that which is necessary [*wājib*], impossible [*mustaḥīl*], and permissible [*jā'iz*] regarding Allah, known as the *ilāhiyyāt*. Secondly, it is the study of the essence of the Messengers, including what is *wājib*, *mustaḥīl*, and *jā'iz* regarding them, known as the *nubuwwāt*. Thirdly, it includes what has been transmitted regarding eschatology and the unseen [*sam'iyyāt*], meaning that which is necessary to believe as reported in the Qur'an and Sunna, without rational proofs.
3. Its fruit [*thamra*] is the honour of having knowledge [*ma'rifa*][66] of Allah as well as everlasting bliss [*sa'āda abadiyya*].
4. Its virtue [*faḍl*] lies in it being the most noble of sciences [*ashraf al- ulūm*], as it deals with the Essence of Allah and the essence of the Messengers. This is a noble subject because of its direct connection to Allah ﷻ.
5. Its relationship (to other sciences) [*nisba*] is that it is the foundation of all religious sciences [*aṣl al-'ulūm al-dīniyya*], while the other sciences are its branches.

[65] This version of the *mabādī' al-'ashra* has been composed by Imam Abū al-'Irfān Muhammad b. Alī al-Ṣabbān al-Miṣrī. He was a scholar of language and literature and wrote various works including a glossary [*hāshiya*] upon al-Ashmūnī's commentary of the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik. He was born in Cairo and died there ■ 1206 H. (Al-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 297; cf. Khālid b. Mahmūd al-Juhanī, *al-Kifāya fī Sharh al-Bidāya*, p. 10)

[66] *Ma'rifa* refers to knowing Allah through His Divine attributes and His Divine names.





How beautiful are the words of the one who said:

أيها المغتدي ليطلب علماً ... كل علم عبد لعلم الكلام

تطلب الفقه كي تصحح حكماً ... ثم أغفلت منزل الأحكام

*O you, seeking nourishment,*
*through the seeking of knowledge,*
*Every science is a servant of 'ilm al-kalām*

*You seek fiqh in order to apply rules properly,*
*Only for you to become negligent,*
*of the One Who sent them*[67]

6. Its founder [*wāḍi'*][68] is Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, as well ■ Abū Manṣūr al-Māturidī, and all those who followed them. They documented the entire creed, systemized it, and refuted the Mu'tazila. All the Prophets came with the same message of *tawḥīd*, while these honourable scholars documented and compiled its details.
7. Its name [*ism*] is the science of *tawḥīd*, and it is the most well known subject since it discusses the oneness of Allah [*waḥdāniyya*]. It is also known as [*'ilm al-kalām*], since there were major debates regarding the attribute of speech [*kalām*] of Allah ﷻ.
8. Its proof [*istimdād*] is of both a rational [*'aqlī*] and a transmitted [*naqlī*] kind.

[67] Ibn 'Asākir relates this in his *Tabyīn Kadhb al-Muftarī fī mā Nasab ilā al-Imām Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī* (no. 392) as an example of what scholars have mentioned in praise of *'ilm al-kalām* and the theologians, ascribing it with a chain to Imam Abū 'Abdullah b. Mujāhid al-Mutakallim. Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ mentions that he was a companion of Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and the teacher of Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Baqillānī, a scholar of *kalām* and *uṣūl*, and an Imam in the Mālikī school. (*Tartīb al-Madārik wa-Taqrīb al-Masālik li-Ma'rifa A'lām Madhhab Malik*, vol. 6, p. 196)

[68] Founder here means the one who first compiled it as a completely systemized work.

9. Its legal ruling [*ḥukm al-shārī'*] is that it is a personal obligation [*wujūb 'aynī*] upon every male and female *mukallaf*.[69]
10. Its main topics [*masā'il*] are that which is necessary, possible, and impossible for Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

These ten principles are referred to as the 'introduction to knowledge' [*muqaddima al-'ilm*].

وَقَدْ عَرَى الدِّينُ عَنِ التَّوْحِيدِ

*When religion was bereft of belief in oneness*

### 2.12 *The letter wāw ■ this verse*

The letter wāw in this verse is known as *wāw al-ḥāl* and is translated as 'while' since it is indicative of the state religion was in at advent of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

### 2.13 *The definition of religion* [*dīn*]

The word *dīn*, lexically, has many meanings. It could mean obedience [*ṭā'a*], worship ['*ibāda*], reward [*jazā'*], or account [*ḥisāb*]. Technically, according to this particular craft, it has two definitions. The more concise definition is: 'those rulings [*aḥkām*] which the Lawgiver legislated [*shar'*] upon the tongue [*lisān*] of His Prophet.'

It is called *dīn* because we act according to it and submit to it. It is also referred to as *milla* since the Lawgiver instructs the angel to instruct the Messenger to instruct us with it. It is also called *shar* or *sharī'a* because Allah ﷻ legislates it upon us through His Messenger.

The longer definition is: 'that which has been divinely established [*waḍ' ilāhī*], steering [*sā'iq*] the possessor of sound intellect ['*uqūl salīma*], through ■ praiseworthy choice [*ikhtiyār al-maḥmūd*], to that which is inherently good [*khayr bil-dhāt*].'

[69] Someone is considered legally responsible [*mukallaf*] after reaching puberty and the age of discernment.





Imam al-Bājūrī then goes on to explain each word in this definition:

'*That which has been established*' [*waḍ'*] can be either of a legal nature or other than that. It excludes certain things that will be brought to light as the definition unfolds.

'*Divinely*' [*ilāhī*] means established by the Divine and excludes that which is apparently established by the human being [*waḍ' bashari*]. In reality, all things are established by Allah.'[70]

Examples of *waḍ' bashari* include the laws established by governments[71] that politicians turn to in managing worldly affairs. This includes the knowledge pertaining to running the household, the best possible way of living with family or colleagues, production related to carpentry [*najjāra*], silk [*qazzāza*] and the likes. The wise amongst the past generations would author books in the field of politics, which would be used by kings who had no law by which to rule.

Verily, Allah alone is the Creator of all things, but man has been blessed with the ability to acquire that which Allah creates. One should not say, after this discussion, that the laws of Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] are not part of the *dīn* because they are derived by man. We say that *fiqh* is definitively of the *dīn* and it ■ divinely established, regardless of the differences of opinions amongst the jurists, which may appear obscure to the layman. The concern of the independent jurist [*mujtahid*] is to bring clarity to the text in order to make it easy for the layman to understand and practice it. The proofs that they present are derived from principles enshrined within the Sacred Law and not from their own desires.

'*Steering*' [*sā'iq*], as it steers (or guides) the *mukallaf* when he is informed about the consequences of practicing that which has been made compulsory [*wājib*] by the Sacred Law. If he hears about the punishment for doing something that is prohibited [*ḥarām*] in the Sacred Law, he will then steer towards the first option, and away from the second. Excluded from that which *sā'iq*

[70] Allah says in the Qur'an: ﴿*And He created you and what you do.*﴾ [37:96]

[71] An example would be the old apartheid system of South Africa where skin colour determined superiority. This is considered *waḍ' bashari*, as it is established by man, and is not a law established by the Divine.

are those things created by the Divine, but not sent to steer us, such ■ the growing of vegetation [*inbāt al-ard*] and the rain which descends from the heavens [*imṭār al-samā'*].

'*The possessor of sound intellect*' [*uqūl salima*] means to free the one of sound intellect from the shackles of rejecting the grace of Allah. This ■ intended and directed only to the one possessing a sound intellect. Excluded are the animals who are inspired by Allah to act according to their instincts, doing only that which brings benefit to them. Examples include the web spun by the spider [*naskh al-'ankabūt*], the beehives serving as a home for the bee, animals staying clear from danger, such as the sheep from the wolf, and so forth.

'*Through a praiseworthy choice*' [*ikhtiyār al-maḥmūd*], from which is excluded that which has been established by Allah, but not through choice, as well ■ that which man accepts through blameworthy choices. Examples include the pain an ill person may experience, or the natural feelings of hunger and thirst. Indeed, one is not steered towards these through choice; instead, one is naturally compelled [*qahran*] to eat and drink.

Another example is the love for this world [*ḥubb al-dunyā*], which one has the choice of either embracing or shunning. Loving it more than the Hereafter is a blameworthy choice [*ikhtiyār al-madhmūm*] and may cause one to avoid paying alms [*zakāt*]. The consequence of one's choice is therefore clear: if the choice is praiseworthy, then it steers one towards that which is praiseworthy, and vice versa.

'*To that which is inherently good*' [*khayr bil-dhāt*] means that *dīn* is of goodness in its essence and comes with a natural inherent purity. The fruits of *dīn* are everlasting bliss and proximity before the Lord of the worlds. Excluded from that which is inherently good is the practice of medicine [*ṭibb*] and agriculture [*falāha*], although these are connected to that which is established by Allah, and do guide the possessor of sound intellect to a praiseworthy choice. However, these do not have an inherent goodness in themselves without meritorious application.[72]

[72] Medicine, for example, is only of benefit if it is used to help the sickly; otherwise, it is of no benefit. For this reason, says Imam al-Bājūrī, it is not inherently good.





The substance of this definition is as follows: *dīn* comprises laws, established by Allah, sent to the servants with the purpose of bringing about a natural and inherent goodness to them.

The commandments of the religion are said to be four.

Imam al-Nawawī mentioned that some scholars composed the following:

امور الدين صدق قصد وفا العهد  وترك لمنهي كذا صحة العقد

*Commandments of the religion include being truthful,*
*in intent, and fulfilling one's covenant*
*Staying clear from the prohibited,*
*as well as having sound belief*

'*Being truthful in intent*' [*ṣidqu qaṣdin*] is that worship [*'ibāda*] be carried out with a praiseworthy intention [*niyya*] and sincerity [*ikhlās*].

'*Fulfilling one's covenant*' [*wafā' al-'ahd*] is to carry out that which the Sacred Law made obligatory.

'*Staying clear from the prohibited*' [*tark al-manhī*] is to refrain from that which the Lawgiver has prohibited.

'*Having the correct belief*' [*ṣiḥḥa al-'aqd*] is to have certainty in the creed of *Ahl al-Sunna*.[73]

## VERSE 3

فَأَرْشَدَ الْخَلْقَ لِدِينِ الْحَقِّ  بِسَيْفِهِ وَهَدْيِهِ لِلْحَقِّ

*Then he guided the creation to the religion of the Truth,*
*With his sword and guidance towards the truth*

[73] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 2)

### 3.1 *Jihād and when it was legislated*

Shaykh Alī Jumu'a said that the Arabic word *jihād*, in Islam, refers to the struggle against one's lower self. The meaning is fundamentally spiritual, referring to the purification of the heart, which was described by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ ■ the 'greater *jihād*,' the highest and most noble meaning of the term. The permission for Muslims to struggle against and ward off aggression has been described as the 'lesser *jihād*.'

This greater *jihād* gives Muslims the innate ability to understand things ■ they are. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best form of *jihād* is a truthful word in the face of a tyrant." *Jihād* is also used in Islamic discourse to describe the pilgrimage of women to Mecca, as it is a hardship for them. However, extremists have misused the word *jihād* and, unfortunately, mass media—being ignorant of Arabic and the subtlety of the term—have now reduced the word to mean terrorist violence. This has worked to the advantage of the extremists. The widespread and unchallenged misinterpretation of any kind of violence against non-Muslims as *jihād* has confused ordinary Muslims around the world.[74]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that at first glance, this verse seems to imply that the noble author apparently leans towards the view that fighting a just war for the sake of Allah with the sword was the primary method of guidance used by the Prophet ﷺ, and that it was legislated immediately after receiving revelation [*'aqib al-irsāl*]. This is not the case, as *jihād* was legislated approximately one year after the emigration [*hijra*][75] from Mecca to Medina at the battle of Badr. In fact, it was legislated in the month of Ṣafar in the second year after *hijra*, as reported by al-Ḥalabī in his compilation on the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

Nonetheless, Shaykh Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī ﷺ cites some verses in the Holy Qur'an substantiating his view that the concept of *jihād* might have been legislated before the *hijra*.

[74] Shaykh Alī Jumu'a, Lecture at the Cambridge inter-faith program: Building bridges of understanding (2009)

[75] The *hijra* took place after thirteen years. *Jihād* was then legislated after approximately fifteen years of revelation.





Allah knows best, and says: ﴿*Then, verily, your Lord, for those who emigrated after they were put to trials, strove* [*jahadū*] *(in the cause of Allah) and were patient; verily, your Lord is most Forgiving, most Gracious.*﴾ [16:110]

This verse was addressed to the Prophet ﷺ before his emigration to Medina. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ confirmed and clarified this fact when he said: "The best form of *jihād* is a truthful word in the face of a tyrant." He ﷺ also said: "The best form of *jihād* is to strive against the whims and fancies of the self for the sake of Allah."[76]

We believe the *jihād* intended here by Shaykh al-Būṭī, during the first thirteen years of Prophethood, was the striving against oppression with Prophetic words of wisdom against the self from our base desires.

The two apparently opposing views are brought to harmony—and actually converge—as the actual usage of the 'sword' against oppression was only legislated, as indicated by Imam al-Bājūrī, after approximately fifteen years into Prophethood, while the striving against oppression with words, and against the lower self, was legislated in Mecca.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you.*﴾ [2:193] Abū al-'Alīya said: "This was the first verse permitting *jihād*, and it was revealed in Medina. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would fight only those who fought him and would avoid non-combatants." Imam Abū Zahra comments on this verse: "Fighting is only permissible in order to defend the freedom of religion and prevent oppression ■ it."[77]

## فَأَرْشَدَ

## *Then he guided*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the letter *fā'* in this verse indicates immediateness [*ta'qīb*], which means that (a) immediately followed (b). This implies that the Prophet ﷺ guided with the

[76] *Al-Jihād fī al-Islam* (p. 19-21)

[77] Abū Zahra, *Tanẓīm* (p. 192)

sword immediately after receiving *tawhīd*. Immediateness, however, differs and varies, depending on the situation.[78]

The presumed duration of immediateness must be appropriate to the context, ■ seen in the following example: '*Tazawwaja Zayd fa-walida lahu* (Zayd married, then his child was born).' Although we are saying that Zayd's son was born after he married, we intend that the birth took place after a number of months. *Jihād* could also not have been possible during the thirteen-year period in Mecca, ■ no permission was granted by Allah ﷻ.[79]

According to Shaykh Shihāb al-Mallawī,[80] it is possible that the immediateness of the Prophet ﷺ guiding the creation was without a lengthy period, and was in fact, a true immediateness [*ta'qīb ḥaqīqī*]. Guidance, therefore, came immediately after revelation [*aqib al-irsāl*], while the sword was only used in *jihād* once it was permitted by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, which was after a period of thirteen years. The Prophet ﷺ did certainly not delay guidance, not even for one moment [*laḥza*].

This we deduce by looking at the words, "*with his sword and guidance towards the truth* [*bi-sayfihi wa-hadīhi lil-haqq*]," turning our attention to the particle ■ (and). We understand from previous discussions that the letter *wāw* does not specify a particular order [*tartīb*], and for this reason, we say that even though the word 'sword' appears before 'guidance,' it does not mean that it necessarily occurred in this sequence.

### 3.2 *Guidance* [*irshād*]

The meaning of guidance here could be taken either literally [*ḥaqīqa*] or metaphorically [*majāz*]. Literally, it means that the Prophet ﷺ himself guided them away from the way they were

[78] For example, a man purchased a ticket and went to China. He could have bought the ticket in January and flown to China in February. Immediateness, therefore, depends on the situation.

[79] This is the appropriate length, as alluded to by Imam al-Bājūrī, in that permission for *jihād* was only given after a good thirteen years into Prophethood.

[80] He is Abū al-'Abbās Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ b. Yūsuf al-Mallawī and was of the first grand Imams of al-Azhar University. He was born ■ 1088 H. and passed away in 1181 H.





living. Metaphorically, it means that he indicated or directed them towards guidance. If we carry it upon the first meaning, then the guidance was specific [*khāṣṣ*] to the believers. If we carry it upon the second meaning, then it was a general [*ām*] guidance towards those who believed as well as those who did not believe.[81]

## الخَلْق

## *The creation*

### 3.3 Creation [*khalq*]

There is consensus that the Prophet ﷺ was sent to both man and *jinn*.[82] Some have included the angels amongst the creation whom the Prophet ﷺ was sent to, and are of the opinion that man and *jinn*, ■ well as angels, are legally responsible [*mukallaf*] to observe the laws of the Lawgiver. The stronger opinion is that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was indeed sent to the angels, but as a sign of nobility [*tashrīf*] and not one of legal responsibility [*taklīf*]. Regarding the animals, he ﷺ was sent to them as a sign of *tashrīf* without doubt.

The word *khalq*, as used by Imam al-Laqānī, seems to include all those who were present with the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime, as well as those who did not meet him. How then could he ﷺ have guided those whom he did not meet? The guidance of the Prophet ﷺ was not restricted to those gathered around him. He was able to guide those who were unable to meet him through his Companions [*ṣaḥāba*], as well as the followers of the Companions [*tābi'īn*].[83]

[81] Allah alone guides whom He wills, while the Prophet ﷺ merely makes this guidance clear: (*Allah guides to His light whom He wills,*) [24:35] and: (*Verily, you guide not whom you like* (O Muhammad), *but Allah guides whom He wills.*) [28:56]

[82] See Chapter 72 of the Qur'an for a detailed discussion on the *jinn*.

[83] Uways al-Qarnī was of the devout ascetics who lived during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, but did not have the opportunity to meet him. He is an example of those guided through him ﷺ without meeting.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Let the one who is present inform the one who is absent, for perhaps the one informed understands better than the one informing."

لِدِينِ الحَقِّ

*To the religion of the Truth*

### 3.4 *'Li' in 'li-dīn al-Ḥaqq'*

Some argue that Imam al-Laqānī should have used the word *'alā* instead of *li*. Imam al-Bājūrī said that those who understand the word 'guidance' to be *majāz*, meaning that the Prophet ﷺ indicated towards guidance, hold the view that the Imam should have used the word *'alā*. Those who understand the word 'guidance' to be *ḥaqīqī*, meaning that he ﷺ is literally the guidance of the creation, are of the opinion that the letter *lām* suites the verse.

### 3.5 *The word ḥaqq*

The intended meaning of the Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] in this verse is in fact Allah, since it is one of His most beautiful names [*asmā' al-ḥusnā*]. *Al-Ḥaqq*, ■ one of the names of Allah ﷻ, can be translated as 'the Truth' or 'the Real.' The meaning of *al-Ḥaqq* ■ the One Who in reality exists always, and forever, non-existence does not precede Him [*lā yasbiquhu 'adam*] and non-existence does not follow Him [*lā yulḥiquhu 'adam*]. All else besides Him ﷻ has an ending. The intended meaning of *ḥaqq* here could also be 'that which conforms to reality [*ṭābaqa al-wāqi'*],' meaning the antithesis of falsehood, or the religion of truth obliterating falsehood.

Adding the word *dīn* to *ḥaqq* and carrying it upon the first meaning refers to the religion of Allah, while carrying it upon the second meaning refers to the religion described ■ one with the laws of truth and clarity.





بِسَيْفِهِ

*With his sword*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, God is most Capable for their aid.*﴾ [22:39] And He ﷻ says: ﴿*Should one of the idolaters seek your protection, then grant it to him until he hears the Word of Allah, then lead him to ■ place of safety.*﴾ [9:6] And He ﷻ says: ﴿*God does not prevent you from being kind to those who have not fought you on account of your religion or expelled you from your homes, or from dealing justly with them. Verily, God loves the just.*﴾ [60:8]

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that 'Ā'isha ؓ said: "Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given the choice between two courses of action [*amrayn*], he always chose the easier of the two, so long as it was not a sin. If it was a sin, he was the farthest of all people from it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never took revenge for himself, but only when the sanctity of Allah was violated, in which case he would take revenge for Allah's sake."

### 3.6 *The sword*

Guidance, as well as alluding [*dalāla*] to it, does not manifest itself by the sword [*sayf*]. It manifests by the tongue only. Those who say that the Prophet ﷺ alluded to guidance understand the allusion to be with the tongue, and not with the sword. Those who prefer the meaning of actual guidance, as mentioned previously, say that guidance with the sword only manifested itself when the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions were forced to defend themselves.

The noble author did not attach the word 'sword' to our master Muḥammad ﷺ. Instead, he attached it to the particle 'he,' alluding to the fact that the sword is not the main focus of the verse. The word 'sword' could also be understood metaphorically. When used in this way, it indicates that if the time came to defend the religion of Allah, people would have to be ready with their swords. This is whether the sword is in the Prophet's ﷺ hand, or in the hand of his followers, until the Day of Judgement [*yawm al-qiyāma*].

The intended meaning of 'sword' in this verse is a tool [*āla*] used in *jihād*, which is permitted in defence against those who fight you, be it with stones or the likes, as used by the Prophet ﷺ at the battle of Uḥud. The noble author used a type of metaphorical speech in this verse known as *majāz mursal*. This is often used to exaggerate in order to bring across a point starkly. He used a specific term [*khāṣṣ*] while intending something more general [*'āmm*].

The words 'with his sword' [*bi-sayfihi*] are linked to the Prophet ﷺ, and may seem to apply to him specifically; the intended meaning, however, is more general, as it was used by all those who were forced to defend the religion of Islam. This category of *majāz* is referred to as *'umūm al-majāz*, meaning that both the literal and metaphorical meanings are considered.

Why did the author show preference to the sword [*sayf*] over guidance [*hadī*] when guidance preceded *jihād*, since *jihād* was only legislated after the *hijra*? There is no doubt [*lā shakk*] that the Prophet ﷺ guided before using the sword, and the reason the noble author gave preference to the word 'sword' over the word 'guidance' is to indicate the significance of *jihād* as one of the keystones of Islam.[44]

Dr. Shawqī 'Allām placed the issue of 'lifting the sword of *jihād*' into its proper perspective, noting the religion's primary values of peace, freedom of religion, compassion and developing a good Islamic character:

> Firstly, the view of Islam as a religion of violence, retribution, and war, is in complete opposition to the truth of our religion. The vast majority of the 1.6 billion Muslims throughout the world are ordinary, peace-loving, decent human beings. Islam, in Arabic, means peace [*salām*]; *salām* is the greeting of Muslims amongst themselves, the last word spoken by a Muslim in his prayers, one of God's names, and one of the names for Paradise.
>
> Secondly, the Qur'an has permitted freedom of religion for all of mankind, saying: ﴿*"To you your religion, and to me mine."*﴾ [109:6]

[44] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 3)





Thirdly, the use of violence in order to spread the faith is prohibited. The Qur'an explicitly states: ﴿*There is no compulsion in religion.*﴾ [2:256] and: ﴿*Call ■ the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel and discuss with them in the most kindly manner.*﴾ [16:125] and: ﴿*God does not prevent you from being kind to those who have not fought you ■ account of your religion or expelled you from your homes, or from dealing justly with them. Verily, God loves the just.*﴾ [60:8]

What we have learned about Islam has been taken from the clear, sober, and scholarly understanding of the Qur'an: ﴿*O people, we have created you from a single male and female and divided you into peoples and tribes, so that you may know one another.*﴾ [49:13]

When God says ﴿*to know one another,*﴾ He does not mean "in order to kill one another." All religions have prohibited the killing of innocents. Rather, we have been commanded to cooperate in a constructive manner: ﴿*And if God did not repel some men by others, then the earth would have been corrupted...*﴾ [2:251]

The first Prophetic saying that is taught to a student of Islam is: "Those who show mercy will be shown mercy by the most Merciful. Show mercy to those on earth and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you."

There is also the advice of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ﷺ, the cousin of the blessed Prophet ﷺ, and one of Islam's most saintly and revered teachers, when he instructed the governor he was appointing in Egypt to be good to his people. He said: "Do not behave like a wild beast, plundering the food (of the people you govern). Indeed, there are two categories of people: either your brother ■ religion, or ■ equal human being. Accidental laxity may come from them, they will make mistakes, and their hands may commit crimes intentionally, or by mistake. Pardon and forgive them, just as you hope God will pardon and forgive you."

For over a thousand years, ordinary Muslims have worshipped God, engaged in developing their society, and sought to cultivate good moral character. This is made clear in the Qur'an: ﴿*I have not created man and jinn except to worship Me,*﴾ [51:56] and: ﴿*He is the One Who created you from earth and settled you therein (to develop it),*﴾ [11:61] and: ﴿*He is successful who has purified (the heart and soul).*﴾ [91:9]

There are more than six thousand verses in the Qur'an, only three hundred of which are related to legal matters; the rest deal with developing good moral character. Likewise, there are over sixty thousand Prophetic traditions and sayings, only two thousand of which are related to legal matters; the rest deal with developing good moral character. For Muslims, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is described as being ■ mercy sent from God to mankind.[85]

### 3.7 *The swords of the Prophet* ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ gave his possessions names, including his swords. As for the names of his swords, they include:

*Al-Ma'thūr*: one of his first swords and named so because he ﷺ inherited it from his father, Sayyidunā 'Abdullah, prior to the first Divine revelation [*waḥī*] descending upon his blessed heart, in Mecca.

*Dhū al-Fiqār*: this is one of the swords obtained by the Prophet ﷺ from the spoils of war taken at Badr. On this very day, the sword of 'Ukāsha b. Miḥṣan broke. The Prophet ﷺ gave him ■ log of wood, which he shook, and it immediately turned into a long, strong, white sword that was firm at its centre [*shadīd al-matn*]. 'Ukāsha went on using that same sword in most of the Islamic conquests until he died.[86]

*Al-Qaḍīb*: this is a thin-bladed sword, which, so it was said, resembled a rod. It was more a sword of companionship for the traveller, rather than to be used for battle. There is no indication in any historical source that this sword was used, or unsheathed, in any defensive or offensive act during the Prophet's ﷺ life. It remained in the house of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and was only used later by the Fatimids.

*Al-Ḥatf*: this is a sword obtained by the Prophet ﷺ from the spoils of war from Banī Qaynuqā'. It is said that Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ obtained his sword, *al-Battār*, ■ spoils of war from Goliath [*Jālūt*] when he defeated him, when he was less than twenty years of age. Allah ﷻ gave Dāwūd ﷺ the ability to work with iron, to

[85] Dr. Shawqi Allām, *The Ideological Battle: Egypt's Dār al-Iftā Combats Radicalization* (p. 4-7)

[86] Ukāsha b. Miḥṣan ﷺ was one of the closest Companions of the Prophet ﷺ.





make armour and weapons, and he made for himself a sword. This is how the *Ḥatf* sword came about, resembling the *Battār*, but larger than it. Dāwūd ﷺ used this sword and it was passed onto the tribe of Levites, who kept it until it fell into the hands of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

وَهَدْيِهِ لِلْحَقِّ

*And guidance towards the truth*

Some scholars interpreted the word 'guidance' to mean the Qur'an and Sunna. Their opinion is weighty, as the Prophet ﷺ communicated with the people firstly by means of the Qur'an, inviting them to Islam, which is evident, and many responded to his invitation. It was only when his ﷺ invitation was rejected, and he was belligerently threatened, that he was permitted to respond with his sword [*sayf*]. This was also the method of his successors [*khulafā'*], his Companions, and those who followed them.

As for repeating the word *ḥaqq* in this verse, the intended meaning of the second is ■ mentioned earlier: 'that which conforms to reality,' meaning the antithesis of falsehood; that is, if the meaning of *al-Ḥaqq* that is mentioned first is understood ■ referring to Allah ﷻ.[87]

It could also mean that the second refers to Allah, while the first means 'that which conforms to reality.' The noble author is thus free from repeating the same word with the same meaning, known as *ītā'*, which is considered blameworthy in the *rajaz* style of poetry. In contrast, he used the same word with different meanings, referred to as *jinās al-tām*, which ■ considered praiseworthy in the *rajaz* style of poetry. Additionally, this poem is not the type of poetry where the end of the first half of the verse must necessarily rhyme with the end of the second half [*mashṭūr*].

[87] "*Then he guided the creation to the religion of the Truth* [al-Ḥaqq]. *With his sword and guidance towards the truth* [*ḥaqq*]"

### 3.8 *Truth [ḥaqq] and truthfulness [ṣidq]*

*Ḥaqq*: this is when a judgement [*ḥukm*] is in conformity with reality, the opposite of which is falsehood [*bāṭil*]. *Ḥaqq* is derived from something which is affirmed, and that which is affirmed [*thābit*] is in fact the reality [*wāqi'*].

*Ṣidq*: this is when a judgement [*ḥukm*] is in conformity with reality, meaning that one has a choice to follow the truth and to be truthful, the opposite of which is lies [*kadhib*]. Some scholars are of the opinion that *ḥaqq* and *ṣidq* carry one and the same meaning.

Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī[88] ﷺ said: "Truthfulness is the sword of Allah. It is not applied to anything except that it cuts right through it."[89]

## VERSE 4

مُحَمَّدُ الْعَاقِبُ لِرُسْلِ رَبِّهِ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَحِزْبِهِ

*Muḥammad ﷺ, the last of the Messengers of his Lord,*
*And his Family, his Companions and his party*

### مُحَمَّد

### *Muḥammad ﷺ*

Here the name 'Muḥammad' has the *tanwīn* (nunation) omitted in order to maintain the rhythm of the poetic metre.

[88] His name is Thawbān b. Ibrāhim. He was the foremost of the Sufi scholars of his time. He was unique in his time with respect of knowledge, piety, scrupulousness, and good manners. On the night of his death, many dreamt they saw the Prophet ﷺ, who said: "I have come to meet Dhū al-Nūn, the friend of God." After his death, the following words were found inscribed on his forehead: "This is the beloved of God, who died in love of God, slain by God." He died in 245 H.
(Shaykh ʿAlī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*)

[89] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 3)





It is permissible [*yajūz*] to analyse grammatically [*iʿrāb*] the noble word [*al-lafẓ al-sharīf*] from three angles:

- *Rafʿ*: in the normative case, the name 'Muḥammad' is the subject [*mubtadaʾ*] taking the place of the predicate [*khabar*] which has been omitted. The predicate omitted is understood to be 'he' [*huwa*]. In this case, the verse will be read as: 'He is Muḥammad ﷺ.' This is the preferred way from the angle of magnifying the Prophet ﷺ. The noble name [*al-ism al-sharīf*] ■ in this way elevated [*marfūʿan*] and a pillar ['*umda*] upon which the creation [*khalq*] itself relies.
- *Naṣb*: in the accusative case, the name 'Muḥammad' is the passive participle [*ism mafʿūl*] taking the place of the verb [*fiʿl*] which has been omitted. The verb omitted is understood to be 'I refer to' [*aʿnī*]. In this case, the verse will be read as 'I refer to Muḥammad ﷺ.' Although this is permissible, it is weaker than reading it in the normative case [*rafʿ*] and will not fit the metre, since the name 'Muḥammad' will now require ■ *tanwīn* and an *alif* [Muḥammadan], except if it is upon the style of those who write the *manṣūb* as they write *rafʿ*, i.e., without the *tanwīn* and *alif* [Muḥammad].
- *Jarr*: in the genitive case, the name 'Muḥammad' is the substitute [*badal*] for something that preceded it. The word that the name Muḥammad stands as a substitute for is ■ *nabī*, as in *ʿalā nabī* in verse 2.

### 4.1 *The name Muḥammad ﷺ*

There is no doubt amongst the believers that the Prophet ﷺ is the master of mankind, for he said: "I am the master of the children of Adam, and this is no boast." 'Master' here is the one imbued with the most sublime character and attributes. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, you are upon an exalted standard of character.*﴾ [68:4]

The name 'Muḥammad' is a proper noun [*ʿalam*], from the passive participle [*ism mafʿūl*], where the middle letter [*ʿayn al-kalima*] is doubled—that is, the letter *mīm* in the name 'Muḥammad.'[90] In other words, the letter *mīm* is repeated.

[90] The reader only needs to investigate the basics of Arabic morphology [*ṣarf*] to understand the technical terms mentioned here.

The name 'Muḥammad,' which means 'to be highly praised,' is the *ism maf'ūl* of the verb *ḥammada*. It is therefore more elevated than the word *maḥmūd*, which means 'to be praised,' and is the *ism maf'ūl* of the verb *ḥamida*.

The name 'Muḥammad' is the exaggerated or emphasized form [*mubālagha*] of 'the one praised' [*maḥmūdiyya*], just as 'Aḥmad' is the *mubālagha* for 'the one who praises' [*ḥāmidiyya*].[91] The Prophet ﷺ is the most esteemed and most revered amongst the praised [*ajallu man ḥumida*], and is more splendid and more magnificent than anyone who ever praised Allah [*a'ẓamu man ḥamida Allah*]. This name is thus the most noble of his ﷺ many names.

Ibn al-'Arabī[92] said: "Verily, Allah has one thousand names and so does the Prophet ﷺ. There is agreement that his ﷺ names are divinely established [*tawqīfī*], meaning that we cannot ascribe a name to him as we see fit."

As for the names of Allah ﷻ, there are differences of opinion [*khilāf*] ■ to whether or not one may add, or invent, a suitable name. The stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*][93] is that one may not do so, making the names of Allah *tawqīfiyya* as well. The difference between the two is that Prophet ﷺ is a man [*bashar*], and because of this, some people may become lax and ascribe inappropriate names to him. For this reason, scholars barred people from adding to the names of the Prophet ﷺ. As for the station of Divinity [*maqām al-ulūhiyya*], no one would dare to traverse it while being negligent, thereby adding an unsuitable name. Subsequently, the scholars have said that no one should ever be careless in adding to the beautiful names of Allah.

[91] The Prophet ﷺ carries both names for he is known as Muḥammad on the earth and Aḥmad in the heavens, according to sound traditions.

[92] He is Muḥammad b. 'Abdullah b. Muḥammad al-Ma'āfirī al-Ishbīlī, Abū Bakr b. 'Arabī al-Mālikī, the judge, jurist, and master of Hadith. He was born in 467 H. and authored books in Hadith, *fiqh*, *uṣūl* and history, including the famous *Aḥkām al-Qur'an* and *'Āriḍa al-Aḥwadhī Sharḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. He died ■ 543 H.

[93] *Rājiḥ* is the weightier opinion amidst several other opinions because of its stronger proofs.





As for the name 'Muḥammad,' it was given to him ﷺ by his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, according to the more correct view; others opine that it was his mother Āmina ﷺ. Both views are correct as she in fact indicated to Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to name him 'Muḥammad' because of what she had observed ■ her dream when she was told: "When you give birth to him, name him 'Muḥammad.'"[94]

She then informed 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib regarding her dream, after which he named him 'Muḥammad,' hoping that he ﷺ would be praised in the heavens and in the earth. Verily, Allah made this hope a reality, as it was in His pre-eternal knowledge of things. In reality, it is Allah Who gave him the name 'Muḥammad,' as it appeared before his birth in many of the previous scriptures.[95] 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was inspired by these signs to give this name as one that is divinely established [*tawqīfī*].

[94] Sayyid Muḥammad b. 'Alawī al-Mālikī said: "Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ related that Āmina ﷺ would relate to the people: 'An angel came to me in a dream during my sixth month of pregnancy, and said to me: "O Āmina, you are pregnant with the best of the worlds. When you give birth to him, name him 'Muḥammad,' and keep it secret."'" (*The Prophet's ﷺ Night Journey and Heavenly Ascent*)

[95] Al-Qasṭalānī said: "Allah ﷻ gave him this particular name two thousand years prior to creating the heavens and the earth, as transmitted in the Hadith of Anas. Ibn 'Asākir related from Ka'b al-Aḥbār: 'Adam ﷺ counselled his son Seth [Shīth], saying: "O my son, you are my succeeding vicegerent, so grasp the dominion of God-fearing [*taqwā*] and the strong handhold of faith. And every time you mention Allah, then immediately mention the name 'Muḥammad' alongside it, as I have seen his ﷺ name inscribed upon the pillar of the Throne. When I travelled throughout the heavens I never saw a single place but therein was inscribed the name 'Muḥammad.' Verily, my Lord made me dwell in Paradise and I never saw therein a palace or a room except that I found the name 'Muḥammad' inscribed upon it. Verily, I have seen the name 'Muḥammad' written upon the necks of the paradisial maidens, the leaves of the reeds of the thickets of Paradise, the leaves of the Ṭūbā tree and upon the Lote Tree of the furthest boundary, the ends of the paradisial curtains and between the eyes of the angels. Therefore, increase in his remembrance, for the angels mention him perpetually.'"
(Al-Qasṭalānī, *Mawāhīb al-Laduniyya*)

## الْعَاقِبْ

### *The last*

The word *ʿāqib* translated as 'last' [or 'final'] is a description [*naʿt*] indicating the finality of Prophethood. This is because he ﷺ gathers mankind at his feet [*ʿalā qadamihi*], which means towards his way [*ṭarīqihi*] and his Sacred Law [*sharʿihi*], as he ﷺ said: "I am the final Messenger [*anā al-ʿāqib*],"[96] which means: "no Prophet [*nabī*] shall come after me [*baʿdī*]."[97]

This means that no Prophet will come with a revelation after the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. This does not contradict the coming of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ at the end of times, nor the fact that Khiḍr ﷺ and Ilyās ﷺ exist and are present amongst us today.[98] Verily, Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ was made the final Messenger in order to bring about a final Sacred Law, thereby abrogating all other previously revealed laws [*sharāʾiʿ*]. He ﷺ is the fruit of all that is great; he is the very purpose of the entire creation, as the fruit of everything comes at the very end. We read the following in the verse [of a poet]:

تعم ما قال سادتنا الاول  اول الفكر آخر العمل

*How fascinating are the sayings of our masters of old,*
*He ﷺ was the first to be mentioned and the last to be brought*

[96] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 3532)
[97] *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (no. 2219)
[98] Scholars differ regarding Khiḍr ﷺ being a Prophet. There is no doubt, however, that Ilyās ﷺ was one of the Messengers, as Allah says in the Qurʾan: ﴿*Verily, Ilyās was from among the Messengers...*﴾ [37:123]

Shaykh ʿAlī Jumuʿa, in his footnotes on the *Tuḥfa* of Imam al-Bājūrī, mentions a Hadith narrated by Ibn Shāhīn, with a weak chain of narration, in which the Prophet [reportedly] ﷺ said: "Four Prophets are alive, two are in the heavens and they are ʿĪsā and Idrīs, while two are on earth and they are Khiḍr and Ilyās. As for Khiḍr, he is in the sea; as for Ilyās, he is on land."

For a comprehensive study on the Prophethood of Khiḍr and Ilyās, see: *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba* (vol. 2, p. 246-281) of Ibn Ḥajar.





If *ʿāqib* in this verse means the 'seal of the Messengers' [*khātim al-rusul*], then what reason could the noble author have for repeating the word 'Messenger' when he said *al-ʿāqib li-rusli Rabbihi*. It is as if the noble author is saying: 'Muḥammad ﷺ is the final Messenger, the Messenger of His Lord...' Although we understand the word *ʿāqib* to mean the finality of Prophethood, the noble author intended by this word 'finality' only. If the word *ʿāqib* is understood in this way, then we come to see that he did not repeat the concept of finality after all.

## لِرُسْلِ

### *Of the Messengers*

The word *rusli* carries a *sukūn*[99] in place of the usual *ḍamma* [*rusli* instead of *rusuli*], in order to maintain the rhythm of the poetic metre.

If it is agreed upon that our master Muḥammad ﷺ is the seal of the Messengers [*rusul*] as well as the seal of the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*], then why did the author limit himself to mentioning the first only? Him being the seal of the *rusul* does not necessitate him being the seal of the *anbiyāʾ*, since the seal of what is more specific [*akhṣ*], cannot be the seal of what is more general [*aʿm*] than it. To this question, we have three answers:

- The noble author used the word *rusul*, intending by it the *anbiyāʾ* as well, using the specific term [*khāṣṣ*] term while intending something more general [*ʿām*]. This is known as *majāz mursal*.

- In the Arabic language, there is a method of sufficiency known as *iktifāʾ*. In this case, the word *rusul* is sufficient to include the *anbiyāʾ* as well. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾan: ﴿*He made you garments to protect you from heat.*﴾ [16:81]

[99] *Sukūn* is a circle-shaped diacritic. It is generally used to indicate that the consonant it is placed above is not followed by a vowel.

We infer from the above that clothing protects one from the cold as well. Similarly, we infer from *rusul* the term *anbiyā'*, as the word *rusul* is sufficient to encompass *anbiyā'* ■ well.

• Shaykh al-Mallawī said that the view held by Shaykh Sa'd al-Taftāzānī is that the *rusul* are the *anbiyā'* and the *anbiyā'* are the *rusul*, meaning that they are one and the same. The noble author carefully selected the word *rusul*, as it is more praiseworthy. This is because Messengership is more noble than Prophethood.

The reason is that the *rusul* receive revelation and then convey it to the creation, connecting them to the Creator and to the creation, while the *anbiyā'* receive revelation, but do not necessarily convey it to the creation, connecting them only to the Creator.

'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām differs with this view.[100] He sees the *anbiyā'* as better [*afḍal*] than the *rusul*. He says that the *anbiyā'* turn away from the creation, focusing only on the Creator, while all the *rusul* must turn from the Creator towards the creation in order to convey what was revealed to them.[101]

## رَبِّهِ

## *Of his Lord*

Lexically, *rabb* means owner [*mālik*], Master [*sayyid*], the One who takes care of, sustains, nourishes [*qayyūm*], and provides everything [*razzāq*].[102]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it means Creator [*Khāliq*] or Owner [*Mālik*] or the like, as composed by Shaykh al-Sujjā'ī:[103]

■ 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd al-Salām b. Abī Qāsim al-Dimashqī al-Shāfi'ī is known as the Sultan of the scholars. He was born in Damascus in 577 H. and died in Cairo in 660 H.

[101] Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām*

[102] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*

[103] He is Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Shāfi'ī al-Sujjā'ī al-Badrāwi al-Azhari, one of the *Shāfi'ī* jurists of Egypt. He died in Cairo in 1198 H.





قريب محيط مالك ومدبر — مربٍ كثير الخير والمولي للنعم

وخالقنا المعبود جابر كسرنا — ومصلحنا و الصاحب الثابت القدم

وجامعنا والسيد فاحفظ هذه — معانٍ أتت للرب فادعوا لمن نظم

*Near, Encompassing, Owner and Planner,*
*Educator, Overflowing in goodness, Generous in blessings*
*Our Creator, the One Worshipped, Filler of voids,*
*The One who sets us straight, the firm standing Companion*
*The Gatherer, the Master, so memorise these,*
*These are the meanings of Lordship,*
*so pray for the one who composed it*

Many scholars hold the view that [the word] *rabb* comes from the verbal noun 'education' [*tarbiyya*]. The meaning of 'education' here is to convey something stage by stage until the desired limit of the educator [*murabbī*] is reached. They used the *maṣdar* as a form of exaggeration [*mubālagha*], ■ Allah ﷻ is in fact the essence of all education ['*ayn al-tarbiyya*].

## وَآلِهِ

## *And his Family*

The Family [*āl*] of the Prophet ﷺ refers to his Family and Household, with some scholars extending it to the rest of the believers.

The noble author intended by *wa-ālihi* that the prayers [*ṣalāwāt*] of Allah and His salutations [*salām*] be upon the Family of the Prophet ﷺ. He sends prayers and salutations upon the Prophet [*nabī*], his Family [*ālihi*], his Companions [*ṣaḥbihi*] and his party [*ḥizbihi*] of followers. He did not limit himself to the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions, as the majority of scholars agree that it is permissible to send prayers upon others besides them, as long as they are connected to the Prophet ﷺ.

In fact, we are commanded to send salutations upon the Prophet ﷺ and his blessed Family as mentioned in [the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of] al-Bukhārī and Muslim: "The Prophet ﷺ said to Ka'b b. 'Ujra ؓ, in response to his request on seeking the manner and etiquette of sending prayers upon him ﷺ: 'Say, O Allah, send prayers upon Muḥammad and upon the Family of Muḥammad [*Allahumma ṣallī 'alā Muḥammad wa-alā āli Muḥammad*]...'"[104]

It is not permissible to send such *ṣalāt* upon anyone independently by saying *Allahumma ṣallī 'alā Abū Bakr* or *'Alī*, though it may seem correct. Similarly, it would be disliked to say about our master Muḥammad, 'to him belongs all might and majesty' [*'azza wa-jall*], since this is one of the terms used to honour Allah ﷻ.

Some scholars deem the *ṣalāwāt* as insufficient if it excludes the Family of the Prophet ﷺ. A group says that it is prohibited to send *ṣalāt* upon the Family of the Prophet ﷺ whilst excluding him. Some claim it is disliked [*makrūh*], yet others say it is not the preferred method [*khilāf al-awlā*]. The more correct opinion [*aṣaḥḥ*] is that it is *makrūh* to send *ṣalāwāt* upon the Family independently of the Prophet ﷺ. Imam Muḥammad al-Juwaynī said that *ṣalāt* upon someone is used only in the case of the third person [*ghā'ib*], while *salām* is used for the second person [*mukhātab*].

If *āl* is mentioned as a supplication [*du'ā'*], then it includes every believer, be they a sinner or not, since the sinner is most in need of the supplication. The Prophet ﷺ said: "My intercession [*shafā'atī*] is for the major sinners of my nation [*umma*]."[105]

If *āl* is mentioned for praising [*madḥ*], then it is specific to believers who are God-fearing. This is so since the Prophet ﷺ said: "The Family of Muḥammad includes all those who are God-fearing."[106]

[104] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 6357) and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 406)

[105] *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and Ibn Abī Dunyā, ■ narrated by Anas b. Mālik

[106] Shaykh 'Alī Jumu'a mentions in his footnotes that this has been narrated by al-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (no. 1692), from Anas b. Mālik in a *marfū'* form, with a weak chain of narration as mentioned by al-Sakhāwī in *al-Maqāṣid al-Ḥusana* (p. 5).





### 4.2 *Āl and ahl al-bayt (the Prophetic Household)*

As for the definition of the Family [*āl*] of the Prophet ﷺ in terms of *zakāt*,[107] according to the *Shāfi'īs* it includes the tribe of Hāshim and the tribe of al-Muṭṭalib. According to the *Mālikīs* and *Ḥanbalīs*, it includes the tribe of Hāshim only. According to the *Ḥanafīs*, it includes the family of 'Alī, Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, 'Aqīl, al-'Abbās, and al-Ḥārith.[108]

'Ammār b. Abū 'Ammār relates that when Zayd b. Thābit ؓ was once about to mount his steed, 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās ؓ held the stirrup for him. He then said to 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās: "There is no need to do this, O cousin of the Messenger of Allah, ■ we should be serving you." Ibn 'Abbās replied: "This is how we have been commanded to honour our scholars and elders." Zayd then said: "Let me see me your hand." When 'Abdullah b. Abbās showed Zayd his hand, he kissed it, saying: "This is how we have been commanded to honour the Family of our Prophet ﷺ."[109]

The Prophet ﷺ commanded us to love his kin and hold fast to them. He advised us concerning them in many traditions. For example, he ﷺ said: "I am leaving two weighty legacies with you. The first is the Book of God. In it is guidance and light, so take it and hold fast to it. The second is the people of my Household. I remind you of God when it comes to the right of the people of my Household."

[107] Although the *āl* of the Prophet ﷺ cannot accept alms [*zakāt*], they can accept *ṣadaqa*, which are voluntary charitable donations given to those in need. In the *sharī'a*, the word *zakāt* refers to the determined share of wealth prescribed by God to be distributed annually amongst deserving categories of the poor. It is also used to mean the act of paying this share (approximately two percent of residual wealth). According to al-Nawawī's report from al-Wāḥidī, this share of wealth is called *zakāt* because it increases the funds from which it is taken, and protects them from being lost or destroyed. Ibn Taymiyya opined that the inner soul of the *zakāt* payer becomes healthier, with his wealth cleansed ■ a result.

[108] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 4)

[109] "Narrated by Ya'qūb b. Sufyān, as quoted in *al-Iṣāba* (vol. 1, p. 561). Al-Ṭabarānī relates a similar tradition from reliable sources, as confirmed by al-Haythamī (vol. 9, p. 34s). Ibn Sa'd reported a similar tradition (vol. 4, p. 175), ■ did al-Ḥākim (vol. 3, p. 423), as quoted in *al-Iṣāba* (vol. 2, p. 332). (Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Kāndahlawī, *The Lives of the Sahaba [Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥāba]* vol. 2, p. 471)

This led our master [Sayyidunā] Ḥusayn to inquire: "Who are his kin, O Zayd (the narrator of the above Hadith). Are not his wives from his kin?" Zayd replied: "His wives are from his kin, but his kin are all those for whom it is prohibited to accept alms." "Who are these?" asked Ḥusayn. "They are the kin of 'Alī, the kin of 'Aqīl, the kin of Ja'far, and the kin of 'Abbās," said Zayd. Our master Ḥusayn asked: "For all of them it is prohibited to accept alms?" Zayd replied: "Yes."[110]

### 4.3 *Permitting members of the Prophetic Household to accept zakāt*

In *Majma' al-Anhur* [by Shaykh Zādeh], Abū Ḥanīfa is reported to have permitted the children of Hāshim to accept alms [*zakāt*], Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, in *Kitāb al-Āthār*, is quoted as saying: "There are two narrations from Abū Ḥanīfa. We hold to the one that permits them to accept *zakāt* since the prohibition is restricted to the era of the Prophet ﷺ." In *Durr al-Muntaqā* [by al-Ḥaṣkafī], Abū Ḥanīfa is reported to have permitted the giving of *zakāt* by one member to another member of the children of Hāshim. He is also reported to have approved that they accept *zakāt* in general. Al-Sakhāwī adds: "This is what we support. This is approved by al-Qahastānī and others."

Ibn Taymiyya also permits giving *zakāt* from one member to another of the children of Hāshim, in agreement with the *Ja'farī* [Twelver Shī'a] opinion.[111]

### 4.4 *The spiritual benefits of alms [zakāt]*

In his Grand Commentary of the Qur'an, Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī writes:

> The rational self [*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*] has two powers, theoretical [*naẓariyya*] and practical ['*amaliyya*]. Its theoretical power is the endeavour to perfection in submission to the greatness of God, and its practical power is its endeavour to perfection in mercy to the creation of God. God obligates *zakāt* in order to purify the human soul [*rūḥ*] and perfect it in graciousness to other people, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "Adorn [*takhallaqū*] yourselves with the character [*akhlāq*] of God."[112]

This encouragement to spend through *zakāt* and charity [*ṣadaqa*] has resulted, with time, in the emergence of charitable trusts all over the Muslim world, trusts devoted not only to helping the poor and needy, but to all good causes for human beings, as well as animals.[113]

## وَصَحْبِهِ

## *His Companions*

The noble author referred to the Companions when he mentioned the Family [*āl*] of the Prophet ﷺ, since this includes those who are God-fearing as mentioned earlier. This indicates the general and broad meaning of the *āl*. He specified his ﷺ Companions [*ṣaḥbihi*] here, alluding to their high status and importance. As for the word *ṣaḥbi*, the stronger opinion is that it is not the plural [*jam'*] of *ṣāḥib*, but it is a collective noun [*ism jam'*], meaning that which is singular in its articulation [*wāḥid min lafẓ*] but plural in its meaning.

### 4.5 *The definition of 'Companion' [ṣaḥābī]*

Imam al-Bājūrī defines a *ṣaḥābī* as: "someone who gathered with the Prophet ﷺ on the face of the earth [*wajh al-arḍ*], believing [*mu'min*] in him after he received revelation, even if he did not see him [i.e., if he was blind], and if he had not yet reached the age of discernment [*mumayyiz*], and did not narrate directly from him ﷺ, according to the correct [*ṣaḥīḥ*] view."

Scholars, however, differ regarding the exact definition of a *ṣaḥābī*. Some define a *ṣaḥābī* as someone who met the Prophet ﷺ whilst believing in him and died as a Muslim. One group says that a *ṣaḥābī* is someone who stayed with the Prophet ﷺ for one year

[110] *Musnad*, Imam Ahmad 4:366
[111] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāt* (vol. 1)
[112] Al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (vol. 16, p. 104)
[113] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāt* (vol. 2)

or longer, or accompanied him in at least one campaign. Another group defines a *ṣaḥābī* as someone who experienced a long encounter with the Prophet ﷺ and narrated a Hadith on his authority. Yet another group defined a *ṣaḥābī* by either one of the previously two things: a long meeting with the Prophet, or narrating Hadith from him ﷺ.

As for the assertion that a *ṣaḥābī* was someone who met the Prophet ﷺ while believing in him, and who died a Muslim, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī said:

> I am inclined to adopt this opinion as the most preferred one. Included in this category are those who had a long or short meeting with him ﷺ, those who narrated Hadith from him and those who did not. It also includes those who accompanied the Prophet ﷺ in a military campaign [*ghazwa*] and those who did not, and those who saw him—even though from a long distance—and those who did not due to some obstacles, such as blindness, and so forth."[114]

The condition of 'believing in him [*muʾmin bihī*]' mentioned in the definition excludes those who met him while disbelieving in him ﷺ, even if they embraced Islam afterwards—unless they met him once more while believing in him ﷺ. This condition also excludes those who apostatised after accompanying the Prophet ﷺ and died as apostates.

Some scholars made it a condition to have reached the age of discernment when meeting the Prophet ﷺ, while others did not. However, some scholars hold the view that before conferring the

[114] The scholars of *tafsīr* mention that one day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was addressing one of the leaders of the Quraysh, hoping that he would embrace Islam. While he ﷺ was speaking to him, ʿAbdullah b. Umm Maktūm, who was a blind man, came to him. He was of those who had accepted Islam in its earliest days. He then began asking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about something, urgently beseeching him.

The Prophet ﷺ hoped that the Quraysh would be guided, so he asked him to wait for a moment as he could complete his conversation. He ﷺ frowned in the face of ʿAbdullah b. Umm Maktūm and turned away from him in order to face the Quraysh. Thus, Allah revealed: ﴿*He frowned and turned away when there came to him the blind man...*﴾ [80:1-3] ʿAbdullah b. Umm Maktūm ﷺ became the first *muezzin* along with Bilāl ﷺ.





title *ṣaḥābī* upon an individual, he must be among those who stayed with the Prophet ﷺ for one year or longer, or fought in a *ghazwa*, or more, along with him. This opinion was cited by Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib ﷺ.[115] Some scholars define a *ṣaḥābī* as someone whom the blessed sight of the Prophet ﷺ fell upon while the individual died believing in him ﷺ.

If a *ṣaḥābī* left the fold of Islam, then embraced Islam again, he is still considered a *ṣaḥābī* according to the *Shāfiʿīs*; however, his previous good deeds are regarded null and void. Most of the *Mālikīs* hold the view that someone who was a *ṣaḥābī* and then left the fold of Islam cannot become a *ṣaḥābī* again, while some of them prefer the view of the *Shāfiʿīs*.

### 4.6 *The Prophets ʿĪsā, Ilyās and Khiḍr* عليهم السلام

Imam al-Bājūrī includes the Prophets ʿĪsā, Khiḍr, Ilyās, and the angels [*malāʾika*] عليهم السلام to be amongst the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. As for Khiḍr عليه السلام and Ilyās عليه السلام, they are alive according to the strongest opinion. The difference between these two ennobled souls is that Ilyās عليه السلام is mentioned in the Qurʾan as one of the Messengers of Allah. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, Ilyās was from among the Messengers.*﴾ [37:123]

One group considers Khiḍr to be a saint [*walī*], others a Prophet [*nabī*], and the rest consider him to be a Messenger [*rasūl*]. The best and more moderate view is that he is a Prophet [*nabī*].[116] Imam al-Ramlī was asked about al-Khiḍr عليه السلام and Ilyās عليه السلام, and answered:

> As for al-Khiḍr, the correct opinion is that he is a Prophet and not a saint, which is the opinion of the majority of the scholars, as al-Khiḍr عليه السلام said in the Qurʾan: ﴿*"...And I did not do it on my own accord."*﴾ [18:82]

[115] "The inclusion of children below the age of discernment in the first category apparently precludes from them the necessity of outward affirmation. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim narrated in *al-Āḥād wal-Mathānī*, his compendium of the Companions, from Ibn al-Musayyib: 'We only included him because of ʿAlī's saying: "How do you order that one of the Companions of Muḥammad be killed without conviction?"'"
(Shaykh Gibril Fouad Haddad, *Definition of the Sahaba*)

[116] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 4)

Then there is Allah's statement: ﴿*We bestowed on him Our mercy...*﴾ [18:65] This indicates revelation and Prophethood, not sainthood. This is the case, even though some scholars insist that Khiḍr ﷺ is not a Prophet.

The correct opinion is that he is alive, ■ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ states: "The majority of scholars have agreed that he is alive, even the commoners believe in this..."

Imam al-Nawawī said:

> The majority of scholars say that he is alive and living amongst us; this is agreed upon between the Sufis and the pious people, as they mention true stories of seeing him in visions, meeting him in waking states, taking knowledge from him, asking him questions, hearing his answers, and experiencing his presence... Therefore, the correct opinion is that he is a human and not an angel, and his location, as well as the location of Ilyās ﷺ, is in the land of the Arabs.[117]

### 4.7 *The number of Companions*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the truth about the number of Companions is only known to Allah ﷻ, just as the number of Prophets and saints is only known to Allah ﷻ.[118]

## وَحِزْبِهِ

*And his party*

As for the word *ḥizb*, it refers to the party of our master Muḥammad ﷺ. A *ḥizb* is a group with an agreed upon or unified objective, whether the objective is good or evil. Allah says in the Qur'an: ﴿*Each party* [*kullu ḥizb*] *rejoicing in that which is with it.*﴾ [30:32] The noble author intended by *ḥizb* all those who follow the Companions, whether they were from the era [*'aṣr*] of the Companions or not.

[117] *Fatāwā al-Ramlī fī Furū' al-Fiqh al-Shāfi'ī* (p. 653)
[118] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 4)



## VERSE 5

وَبَعْدُ فَالْعِلْمُ بِأَصْلِ الدِّينِ  مُحَتَّمٌ يَحْتَاجُ لِلتَّبْيِينِ

*To proceed, knowledge of the foundation of the religion,*
*Is compulsory, and requires clarification*

## وَبَعْدُ

*To proceed*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that it is the custom of authors to use these words at the beginning of their books, following the Sunna of the Prophet ﷺ in how he arranged his letters.

The original wording is *ammā ba'd*. The noble author omitted the word *ammā* and put the letter *wāw* in its place. *Wa-ba'du* simply means 'and to proceed.' It is generally understood ■ a transition from one form of speech to another.

We often hear the phrase *ammā ba'd* during the Friday sermon. In Arabic literature, the preface is nearly always divided into three main parts: the initial commendation, the middle part, followed by the introduction to the work. In the initial commendation, the author proceeded with the *basmala*, the *ḥamdala* and sending prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, his Family, his Companions, and those who follow them. The middle part refers to *ammā ba'd*, which means: 'now, to the point,' or: 'as for what follows,' and which separates the commendation from the introduction. The introduction then briefly introduces the work and its objective to the reader.

It has been mentioned by all the major Hadith collectors that the Prophet ﷺ used the words *ammā ba'd* when he delivered a sermon [*khuṭba*].[119]

[119] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 867). ■ narrated by Jābir b. 'Abdullah

There are, however, different views regarding who first used these words. One opinion states that it was the Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ.[120] He used these words to end one topic and begin with another, like truths and falsehood. Some said that he used it to separate the body of his discourse from its ending.

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that there are differences of opinion regarding who first uttered these words. Some scholars said that it was the Prophet Adam ﷺ. Some said it was Qussu b. Sā'ada al-Iyādī b. 'Amr b. 'Adiyy, who was from the tribe of 'Iyāḍ. Some said it was Suḥbān b. Zufr b. Iyās al-Wā'ilī, who was of the preachers of Yathrib during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, while others said it was Ka'b b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib, who was from the Quraysh. The most well known view, however, is that it was the Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ."[121]

## فَالْعِلْمُ

## *Knowledge*

**Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī said:**

> Knowledge is to perceive things [*idrāku shay'*] as they are. It is customarily understood to refer to a set of well-arranged principles [*qawā'id mudawwana*]. Knowledge also refers to the ability by which a person is able to perceive things.

Imam al-Juwaynī said:

> Knowledge is the recognition of the thing known as it really is... necessary knowledge [*'ilm ḍarūrī*] is knowledge that does not require reflection [*naẓar*] or deduction [*istidlāl*], such as knowledge gained through any of the five senses.

[120] Shaykh 'Alī Jumu'a mentions in his footnotes that this is according to a Hadith narrated by Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī.
[121] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 5)





> Acquired knowledge [*'ilm muktasab*], on the other hand, is that which requires reflection and deduction. Reflection [*naẓar*] is to contemplate the object of what is being reflected upon. *Istidlāl* is the seeking of proof. Proof [*dalīl*] is what leads to that which is sought. Speculative [*ẓann*] is to deem each of two things possible, with one predominant over the other. Doubt [*shakk*] is to deem two things possible, without predominance of one over the other.[122]

**Shaykh Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī said:**

> When there is harmony between reflection [*naẓar*] and reality [*ḥaqīqa*], then this recognition is called knowledge [*'ilm*]. For example, we look at some flowers placed before us, we reflect upon them in our minds, and we find that the result of our reflection corresponds with reality. When we realise that they look a certain way and have a distinct smell, then this realisation—which corresponds with reality—is called knowledge. However, if the flowers were artificial and we looked at them and thought they were real, this would be called perception, and not knowledge.

Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī said: "Knowledge is that which causes its possessor to become knowledgeable." Another group claimed that knowledge is what permits its carrier to act masterfully and perfectly.[123]

### 5.1 *Imam al-Ghazālī on beneficial knowledge*

> Beneficial knowledge is that which increases you in fear of Allah ﷻ. It increases your insight into the faults of your ego. It increases you in awareness of how to worship your Lord. It reduces your desire for this world, while increasing your longing for the next world.

[122] Imam al-Juwaynī, *Al-Waraqāt fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*
[123] Imam al-Juwaynī, *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief* [*Kitāb al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi' al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-I'tiqād*], Section: '*The True Nature of Knowledge*'

> It opens your spiritual insight to the defects of your actions, in order to avoid them. It discloses to you the plots and deluslons of the devil, and how he misleads the scholars—those who have gone astray until the cursed one exposes them to the wrath and anger of God. They have used religion to purchase this world ■ a means to gain the wealth of sultans, to consume the wealth of religious endowments, the poor, and the needy. They have turned their energies throughout the day to the acquisition of prestige and high standing in the hearts of people—something which forces them to show off their good deeds, to argue, and to be quarrelsome and ostentatious when they speak.[124]

### 5.2 *The opposite of knowledge*

The opposite of knowledge [*'ilm*] is ignorance [*jahl*].

Imam al-Juwaynī said that ignorance is the perception [*idrāk*] of something contrary to how it really is. Scholars divide *jahl* into two types: simple ignorance [*jahl basīt*] and compound or complex ignorance [*jahl murakkab*].

- Simple ignorance: *jahl basīt* is the basic lack of knowledge of something. An example would be to say: "I do not know." This is a minor problem in the sense that it is easily remedied and replaced with knowledge, given the proper steps summed up by the act of asking.
- Compound ignorance: *jahl murakkab* is that one is convinced he knows but in reality does not know, and refuses to accept that he does not know. This kind of ignorance is considered a disease when it comes to those who chant: "I do know! I do know! I do know!" when they know less than nothing. They are bereft of beneficial knowledge and mostly possess worthless savoir-faire.

[124] Imam al-Ghazālī, *The Beginning of Guidance* [*Bidāya al-Hidāya*] (p. 52-53)





Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād said:

> Ignorance is the origin of all evil and the root of all harm. Ignorant people are included in the Prophet's ﷺ saying: "This world is accursed, and accursed is what is in it, except for the remembrance of God and the learned and those learning."
>
> It is said that when God created ignorance, He said to it: "Come!" but it moved away. He said to it: "Go!" but it came. Then He said: "By My might, I have created nothing within creation more hateful to Me than you, and I shall place you amongst the worst of My creation!" 'Alī ﷺ said: "There is no enemy worse than ignorance. A man is the enemy of that which he has no knowledge of."
>
> Ignorance is blameworthy according to both textual and rational proof. Its harm is hardly unknown to anyone. An ignorant man succumbs to the neglecting of obligations and the committing of sins, whether he wishes to or not. This is because someone who is ignorant neither knows the obligations God has enjoined upon him, nor the transgressions He has forbidden him. A person can leave the shadows of ignorance only by the light of knowledge. How excellent are the words of Shaykh 'Alī b. Abī Bakr, who said: "Ignorance is a fire that burns a man's religion. And its extinguishing water is knowledge."
>
> Therefore, you must learn what God has made incumbent for you to learn. You are not obliged to acquire extensive knowledge, but that without which your faith remains unsound, you must learn. Examples of these are the proper performance of your obligatory rites of worship and how to avoid what is prohibited. This is an immediate duty with regard to immediate obligations, and a deferred duty for those matters that may be deferred. Mālik b. Dīnār ﷺ used to say: "Someone who seeks knowledge for himself, a little will suffice him; but someone who seeks knowledge for the people, the people's needs are numerous."[125]

[125] Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, *Two Treatises: Mutual Reminding and Good Manners* (p. 16)

## بِأَصْلِ الدِّينِ

### *Of the foundation of the religion*

Foundation [*aṣl*] is defined as: 'that upon which something is built.' Others define it as: 'that from which things branch out.' *Far'* is that which is built upon the foundation. *Aṣl* is therefore the root or foundation, while *far'* is the branch.

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the noble author intended by *aṣl* the creed [*'aqīda*], and it includes the knowledge related to what is necessary [*wājib*], permissible [*jā'iz*], and impossible [*mustaḥīl*] regarding the Creator and His Messengers.

This particular work focuses on the foundations or fundamentals [*uṣūl*] of the religion [*dīn*], which is the basis for all of its sciences, as well ■ the branches [*furū'*]. The subject of the fundamentals of the religion is often referred to as *uṣūl al-dīn*.

The pillars of Islam are five, the first of which is establishing faith in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. The remaining four pillars include the five daily prayers [*ṣalāwāt al-khams*], fasting during the month of Ramadan [*ṣiyām*], cleansing of wealth by alms [*zakāt*] and to undertake the Hajj if one has the means.

## مُحَتَّمٌ

### *Is compulsory*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the noble author used the word *muḥattam* here to mean compulsory and necessary.[126]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that knowledge of the fundamentals of the *dīn* is *muḥattam* and no one is permitted to ignore and be negligent of it, ■ Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Know that there is no god but Allah.*﴾ [47:19]

[126] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 5)





Learning this science is a personal obligation [*wājib 'aynī*] upon every legally responsible [*mukallaf*] male [*dhakar*] and female [*unthā*]. The obligation is to acquire a basic knowledge of the creed including its general proofs [*dalīl ijmālī*], while knowledge of the particulars and details [*dalīl tafṣīlī*] is a communal obligation [*farḍ kifāya*].

The reason for the general proofs being obligatory is to restore certainty when possible doubts arise. Some hold the opinion that the detailed proofs are ■ individual obligation [*wujūb 'aynī*]. This view is rejected, because it limits [*ḍayyiqū*] Allah's vast and all-encompassing mercy [*raḥma wāsi'a*] and restricts Paradise [*janna*] to the theologians only. The truth of the matter is that the individual obligation is to know the general proofs and not the detailed proofs.

### 5.3 *General proofs* [*dalīl ijmālī*] *and detailed proofs* [*dalīl tafṣīlī*]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is a personal obligation [*wājib 'aynī*] for one to have *dalīl ijmālī* if he is incapable [*ma'jūz*] of determining [*taqrīr*] and solving the more complex theological problems [*ḥall shubhihi*]. As for the *dalīl tafṣīlī*, it means having the capacity [*maqdūr*] to determine and solve the more complex theological problems.

If it was said to you: "What proof is there that God exists?" you would reply: "The world ['*ālam*] is my proof," even though you were unable to provide the details of your argument. This is what is meant by *dalīl ijmālī*. Likewise, were you to know the detailed proofs and yet unable to explain them, this would remain *dalīl ijmālī*.

On the other hand, if you know the detailed proofs—and have the capacity to explain and resolve the more complex theological problems—this would be called *dalīl tafṣīlī*.

If it was then said to you: "What proof is there that God exists?" then you would reply that this world is your proof, knowing the details of your argument. These are, firstly, to affirm the contingency [*ḥudūth*][127] of the world; secondly, that the world

[127] The term 'contingent' [*ḥādith*] refers to something that is dependent on something else in order to exist.

has the possibility [*imkān*] to exist, and that at one point it did not exist;[128] and thirdly, that the world is both contingent [*ḥādith*] and possible [*mumkin*].

This argument would then be broken down into smaller steps in order to ward off any doubts, and this is referred to as *dalīl tafṣīlī*. The details of the first point are as follows: the world is contingent and everything that is contingent [i.e., brought into existence] must have an originator [*muḥdith*].

The details of the second point are: it is possible for the world [*'ālam*] to exist, and it was once non-existent. Everything that was once non-existent and then became possible [to exist] must have a maker [*ṣānī'*].

The details of the third point are: it is possible for the world to exist and it became existent. Everything that was once non-existent and then became existent must have a maker or originator.[129]

يَحْتَاجُ لِلتَّبْيِين

*And requires clarification*

Since the compulsory requires clarification and understanding, we will briefly touch on what the science of scholastic theology entails. Theology is derived from the Greek term *theos* (God) and *logos* (discourse). Theology is a systematic study or discourse regarding the fundamental beliefs of a religion.

### 5.4 *The rules concerning creed [aḥkām i'tiqādiyya]*

Beliefs must be based on sources that are considered free from all doubt regarding the text [*qaṭ'ī al-thubūt*] and what it alludes to [*qaṭ'ī al-dalāla*]. This includes the Qur'an and the mass-transmitted [*mutawātir*] Hadith.

[128] The term 'possible' [*mumkin*] refers to something for which non-existence and existence are possible.
[129] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 5)





Regarding the rules concerning information [*aḥkām akhbāriyya*], these include: ■ speculatively affirmed text [*ẓannī al-thubūt*] with a speculative meaning that it alludes to [*ẓannī al-dalāla*], or a speculatively affirmed text with a definitive meaning it alludes to [*qaṭ'ī al-dalāla*], or a definitively affirmed text [*qaṭ'ī al-thubūt*] with a speculative meaning it alludes to.

This kind of information, because it is speculative [*ẓannī*] by nature, does not yield certainty of knowledge [*lā yufīd al-'ilm*]. Consequently, it cannot be taken as being part of creed [*'aqida*], which must always be free from doubt. Muslim theologians are very strict regarding which narrations are acceptable when it comes to matters of creed.

### 5.5 *The definition of 'ilm al-kalām*

There are two opinions ■ to why Islamic theology is called *'ilm al-kalām*. The first is because *kalām* is the translation of *logos*, which was the rational dialogue and human reasoning about the cosmos in pre-Socratic philosophy. The second is that it is called *kalām* because historically, the most controversial theological debate in the second and third Islamic centuries—during which time this science was developed—was whether the Word of Allah is created or not.

*'Ilm al-kalām* is a title of that branch of knowledge in Islam that is usually translated as scholastic or rational theology. Lexically, *kalām* means 'speech.' *Yatakallam fī* means 'to speak about' or 'to discuss' something. In an early usage of the word *kalām* in this sense, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have found a group of Muslims discussing predestination [*yatakallamūna fī al-qadr*].

Al-Ījī[130] defines *'ilm al-kalām* as: "the science which enables the student to affirm and [rationally] prove the beliefs of Islam, and to answer any objections which may be raised against them."[131]

[130] Imam 'Aḍud al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ījī was born near Shiraz after 765 H., and received his education there under a student of a student of Imam al-Bayḍāwī. In theology, he is known for two important works. One is the *Mawāqif*, a comprehensive work devoted mostly to the philosophical preliminaries. The second is rather terse, focuses on creed, and is known as the *'Aḍudiyya*.
[131] Al-Ījī, *Al-Mawāqif fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* (p. 31)

Imam al-Ghazālī defines it as: "the branch of knowledge which deals with the rational proofs of the Islamic creed and with the refutation of the heretical sects, such as the *Khawārij*."

### 5.6 *The basic knowledge required by the theologian*

The theologian [*mutakallim*], therefore, must be proficient in several areas of knowledge, including having vast and extensive knowledge of the Arabic language. He must be well-versed in logic [*mantiq*] and have a holistic understanding of the Qur'an and Sunna. He must be trained in the proper etiquette [*adab*] of debate, such as level-headedness, clarity of thought, the ability to listen well, sobriety, patience, mildness, and even-temperedness. Finally, he or she must be a pious and God-fearing Muslim.

Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī mentioned three conditions for the one who wishes to study scholastic theology:

- Sound knowledge of the religious sciences [*'ulūm al-dīn*]
- Strong intellect, so that one may use reason and engage in debates
- Strength in practising the *dīn*, so that the intellectual challenges faced are not spiritually draining

### 5.7 *The names used for theology* [*'ilm al-kalām*]

- *Fiqh al-akbar* was attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa in the second century after *hijra*. The adjective *akbar* shows the superiority of matters related to the fundamentals of the faith over branches of the *shari'a*.
- *'Ilm al-kalām* is one of the earliest names for this science. Imams Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik, and al-Shāfi'ī &. are said to have given their opinions on *kalām* and the *mutakallimīn*. This title seems to have been the most common and enduring.
- *'Ilm uṣūl al-dīn* is another early name, which is based on the division of religious knowledge into the fundamentals or roots [*uṣūl*] and its branches [*furū'*]. This title was used by Imam al-Ash'arī in his major works *al-Ibāna* and *Uṣūl al-Diyāna*.





- *'Ilm al-'aqā'id* is a later name, dating perhaps from the fourth century after *hijra*. This name appears in the works of Imams al-Ṭaḥāwī, al-Ghazālī, and al-Ījī.
- *'Ilm al-nazar wal-istidlāl* is mentioned by Imam al-Taftāzānī in his introduction to *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya*. In early theological works, this name was given to the first introductory chapter, which discusses proofs and the methodology of *'ilm al-kalām*. Perhaps because of the importance of the methodology, the name was applied to the science as a whole.
- *'Ilm al-tawḥīd wal-ṣifāt* was a name given to it due to the importance of the oneness and attributes of Allah. It appears in the introduction to *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya* by al-Taftāzānī.
- *'Ilm al-tawḥīd* is so named since the oneness of God is the most important article of faith in Islam.

## VERSE 6

لٰكِنْ مِنَ التَّطْوِيلِ كَلَّتِ الهِمَمْ  فَصَارَ فِيهِ الِاخْتِصَارُ مُلْتَزَمْ

*However, due to its lengthiness, aspirations dwindled,*
*Hence, brevity in it became necessary*

### لٰكِنْ

*However*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the noble author saying *lakin* indicates *istidrāk*, which means to 'alter' or 'clarify' a previous statement. *Istidrāk* is used here to clarify the end of the previous verse, '*requires clarification*' [*yaḥtāju lil-tabyīn*].

Clarification requires lengthening a statement, and this the noble author elucidated by his saying *lakin*, so it is as if he said: 'Although this craft [*fann*] is in need of clarification [*tabyīn*].

its explanations need not be lengthy [*taṭwīl*] as it will lead to a loss of interest [*sa'āma*] and boredom [*malal*]. To avoid tiring the reader and weakening his resolve, ■ abridgment—without altering its essence and meaning—became necessary.'

## مِنَ التَّطْوِيلِ

### *Due to its lengthiness*

#### 6.1 *Long explanations*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that 'due to' [*min*] means 'explanation' [*ta'līl*], and that the intended meaning of 'lengthiness' is 'a complete lengthening' [*al-taṭwīl al-kāmil*] since the *al* in *al-taṭwīl* indicates completeness [*kamāl*]. The precaution [*mahdhūr*] consequently revolves around exaggeration [*mubālagha*] being the cause of the lengthening, and does not regard simple lengthening, since in it is no harm [*lā yaḍurr*].

Lengthening [*taṭwīl*] is defined as providing the intended meaning, but with additional wording [*lafẓ zā'id*] to what is customarily used, thereby aiding laypeople who lack knowledge of the expressiveness [*faṣāḥa*] and rhetoric [*balāgha*] in order to understand what is being said.

In this context, brevity [*ikhtiṣār*] is defined ■ providing the intended meaning using fewer words than what is customarily used. Balance [*musāwā*] is defined as providing the intended meaning using words equal [*lafẓ musāwin*] to what is customarily used.

## كَلَّتِ الهِمَمْ

### *Aspirations dwindled*

This means that aspirations for this craft dwindled due to the lengthy nature of the works produced. This resulted in fatigue and boredom.





In these words, *kallat al-himam*, there is a rational metaphor [*majāz 'aqlī*].[132] *Himam* is the plural [*jam'*] of *himma* and carries the lexical meaning of 'strength' [*quwwa*] and 'determination' [*azm*]. Customarily, it carries the following meaning: the condition of the self [*ḥāla al-nafs*], followed by an overwhelming force, which drives one to a desired objective. Thus, if it is connected to something lofty then it becomes a high aspiration [*'alyya*], otherwise it becomes a low aspiration [*danīyya*]. However, if it is not connected [*lam tata'allaq*] to neither of them, it is neither high nor low.

Our master, Imam al-Shāfi'ī ﷺ, mentioned one of the highest aspirations a servant may aspire to when he was asked: "What is the greatest deed a servant may perform in order to attain proximity [*qurba*] to Allah?" He wept, and then replied: "That Allah looks towards your heart and finds that you desire nothing of this world or the next, except Him."

## فَصَارَ فِيهِ الِاخْتِصَارُ مُلْتَزَمْ

### *Hence, brevity in it became necessary*

#### 6.2 *Brevity*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is not hidden that the word 'brevity' [*ikhtiṣār*] is the noun [*ism*] of 'became' [*ṣāra*] and the word 'necessary' [*multazam*] is its predicate [*khabar*].[133] The noble author placed a *sukūn* on the word *multazam*, the *khabar* of the word *ṣāra*, instead of a *ḍamma*; this is in accordance with the dialect of the tribe of Rabī'a.

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■ This type of metaphor is used when ascribing an action to something that cannot actually perform the action itself. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an: ﴿...*Ask the town,*﴾ when the people of the town are to be asked.

[133] *Ṣāra* follows the rules of *kāna* in the Arabic language and carries the meaning 'to become.' *Ṣāra*, therefore, has a noun referred to as *ism ṣāra*, which is always in the normative case [*raf'*], its primary sign being a *ḍamma*; and a predicate referred ■ as *khabaru ṣāra*, which is always in the accusative case [*naṣb*], its primary sign being a *fatḥa*.

That which is necessary [*multazam*] is an abridgment [*ikhtiṣār*] which does not violate its meaning [*ghayr al-mukhil*], otherwise it would be a blameworthy [*madhmūm*] abridgement.

An example of a praiseworthy [*maḥmūda*] abridgement is the following from Ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, who said:

> All that the theologians [*mutakallimīn*] mention in the science of *tawḥīd* is summed up by the people of realisation [*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*] in two statements:
>
> - The belief that everything one conceives [*taṣawwar*] from whims [*awhām*], Allah differs [*khilāf*] from that.
> - The belief that the Essence [*Dhāt*] of Allah ﷻ is not similar to other essences [*dhawāt*] and that He ﷻ is not lacking in any attributes [*ṣifāt*].

This is a summary taken from the footnotes of Shaykh al-Shanawānī.[134]

## VERSE 7

وَهٰذِهِ أُرْجُوزَةٌ لَقَّبْتُهَا  جَوْهَرَةَ التَّوْحِيدِ قَدْ هَذَّبْتُهَا

*And this poem I have named,*
*The Pearl of Oneness, and I have beautified it*

وَهٰذِهِ أُرْجُوزَةٌ لَقَّبْتُهَا

*And this poem I have named*

As previously mentioned, the *Jawhara*, consisting of one hundred and forty-four verses, is composed in *rajaz*, which is a didactic form of poetry. Imam al-Laqānī named it '*The Pearl of Oneness*,' thereby indicating its invaluable nature.

[134] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 6)





He kept the text brief whilst maintaining its meaning, and refined it with his creative flavour. The rules for reciting and composing in *rajaz* vary from that of prose, while both lend themselves to a margin of flexibility. *Rajaz* stands out since it is read with both rhythm and rhyme. Some hold the opinion that these two attributes slightly elevate *rajaz* above prose. Others hold the opinion that *rajaz* is in fact the lowest form of poetry.

### *7.1 Didactic poetry*

Didacticism is an instructive and educational concept, emphasising the conveying of informative qualities through literature and art. The word is derived from the Greek *didaktikos*, which means 'skilled in teaching.' Of the many different types of didacticism, didactic poetry is a form in which information is communicated in an elegant, flowing, and pleasing form. The main function of didactic literature is not to provide the reader with entertainment, but to teach.

Didactic poems give the reader crucial life lessons by using a moral, or a theme. The poet writes an inspirational piece, flowing with information that may help to teach the reader to act in a certain ethical way, or to follow a certain faith correctly. The poet expects the reader to develop the skills that he wishes to pass on through the didactic verses. The ancient Greek writer Hesiod is said to have been the founder of didactic poetry. Arabic didactic poetry, taken in a broad sense, sets out to instil morals, or to impart information.

### *7.2 The legal ruling on poetry*

Poetry is in itself considered an expression of feelings and emotions; it reflects tenderness and sensitivity. Poetry can be an influential means towards psychological and social reform. It is worth mentioning that the means take the same rulings as their objectives. Therefore, if poetry is composed with the purpose of praising Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ—and it expresses noble feelings and true love amongst people, as well as the love of good affairs—then it is permissible. Allah ﷻ will reward the poet. However, it is prohibited if it incites immorality in the reader, or if it contains anything that contradicts Islam.

## جَوْهَرَةُ التَّوْحِيدِ

## *The Pearl of Oneness*

### 7.3 *The pearl*

Since ancient times, the pearl has been a symbol of unblemished perfection. It is the oldest known gem, and has been considered the most valuable for centuries. A pearl is best described ■ a hard, lustrous, spherical mass, typically white or bluish-grey, formed within the shell of a pearl oyster.

Allah ﷻ often mentions the pearl when describing heavenly rewards: ﴿*There comes forth from both of them the pearls, large* [*lū'lū'*] *and small* [*marjān*].﴾ [55:22]

Mujāhid, Qatāda, Abū Ruzayn, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and our master ʿAlī ؓ said that *marjān* means 'small pearls.' It is also said that it denotes large, precious pearls, as was mentioned by Ibn Jarīr from some of the predecessors [*salaf*]. Interestingly, Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said: "When it rains, the oysters in the sea open their mouths and what falls in them of drops, turns into pearls." Its chain of narrators is *ṣaḥīḥ*.[135]

Allah says: ﴿*And round about them will serve, devoted to them, young male servants (as handsome) as pearls well-guarded.*﴾ [52:24]

Imam al-Suyūṭī said:

> And there will circulate from all around them, for service, youths delicate in demeanour... as if, in terms of their beauty and immaculateness, they were hidden pearls preserved inside shells, because when it (a pearl) is inside the shell, it is better than one that is not.[136]

Allah says: ﴿*And round about them will (serve) perpetual youths: When you see them, you would think they are scattered pearls.*﴾ [76:19]

[135] *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (55:22)
[136] *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (54:24)





Ibn Kathīr said:

> When you see them dispersing to fulfil the needs of their masters in their great number, with their beautiful faces, their handsome colours, their fine clothing and their ornaments, you would think that they were scattered pearls. There is no better quality than this, nor is there anything more pleasant to look at than scattered pearls in a beautiful place.[137]

Imam al-Suyūṭī adds:

> And those in Paradise will be waited upon by immortal youths, forever, and never ageing, whom when you see them—because of their beauty and the way in which they are dispersed about, offering service—will seem to be scattered pearls, from their string, or from their shells...[138]

In his *Tārīkh*, Ibn ʿAsākir narrates from our master ʿAlī ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The footstool [*kursī*] is made of pearl and the pen [*qalam*] is (also) made of pearl. The length of the *qalam* is seven thousand years and the height of the *kursī* is only known to Allah."[139]

### 7.4 *Using extravagant names for books*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is inappropriate to name books extravagantly by using names from revelation, ■ narrated by some from the book *al-Minan* of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, such as '*The Book of the Night Journeys and Ascents*' [*Kitāb al-Isrāʾāt wal-Maʿārij*], because it implies competing with the Prophet ﷺ in his Ascent [*miʿrāj*]; or '*The Keys of the Unseen*' [*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*], or '*The Clear Signs*' [*al-Āyāt al-Bayyināt*], because it implies competing with Allah ﷻ in knowing the unseen [*ʿilm al-ghayb*]. The stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*], however, is that it is permissible to use such names.

[137] *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (76:14)
[138] *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (76:19)
[139] *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* (2:255)

قَدْ هَذَّبْتُهَا

*And I have beautified it*

This means: 'I have purified it [*saffaytuhā*], polished [*naqqaḥtuhā*] from it all doubts [*shubha*] and corrupt beliefs [*'aqā'id al-fāsida*], cramming [*ḥashw*] and lengthening [*taṭwīl*].'[140] This sentence—indicating the purity of the text—is why the noble author named the poem *Jawhara*. For after its purification, there remains only the pearl [*al-jawhara al-khāliṣ*].

At first glance, it seems that the noble author is praising himself for the composition of the poem. This is certainly not the case. He is in fact praising Allah for His blessings and at the same time giving sincere advice to the one who wishes to read the text. Moreover, it is permissible for a person to praise himself in certain circumstances.[140]

In summary, rather than praising himself, the noble author gives us confidence and removes any doubts by using the words 'and I have beautified it.' He eloquently embedded the entire creed of Islam in one hundred and forty-four lines of poetry, and removed from it all that was unnecessary. It is in this way that he refined and embellished the poem.

## VERSE 8

وَاللهَ أَرْجُو فِي القَبُولِ نَافِعاً  بِهَا مُرِيداً فِي الثَّوابِ طَامِعاً

*And in Allah do I hope for acceptance, benefitting,*
*By it, for the one seeking, desiring its reward*

[140] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 7)





وَاللهَ أَرْجُو

*And in Allah do I hope*

This means: 'I have no hope except in Allah.' The noble author placed the object [*maf'ūl*] first, showing restriction [*ḥaṣr*], indicating that it is Allah alone Whom he seeks acceptance from.[141] The *maf'ūl* (Allah) is placed first in the sentence and is in the accusative case [*naṣb*]; that is, it carries a *fatḥa* [*wa-Allaha*] for magnification [*ta'ẓīm*] of the Holy name.

### 8.1 *Hope* [*rajā'*]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the word *rajā'* with an elongated *alif* [*madd*] and the *hamza* ['] carries the lexical meaning of hope, and *rajā* without the *hamza* carries the meaning of 'the side of a place.' Allah uses the second meaning in the verse: ﴿*And the angels will be on its side* [*arjā'ihā*].﴾ [69:17]

In the *sharī'a* it is used to refer to 'the attachment of the heart to what it desires [*bi-marghūb fihi*] while making use of the means [*asbāb*], otherwise it is but vain desire [*tama'*], which is blameworthy [*madhmūm*].

The first is like hoping for Paradise whilst refraining from sin [*tark al-ma'āṣi*] and performing good deeds [*fi'l al-ṭā'āt*]. Explaining the second case, Shaykh al-Khaṭīb[142] used as an example a sacred [*qudsī*] Hadith in his *Tafsīr*, where Allah ﷻ says: "How little shame does one display who hopes for My garden without performing good deeds. How can I pour of My mercy upon the miser of good deeds?"[143]

[141] The normal order of the typical verbal sentence [*jumla al-fi'liyya*] in the Arabic language is to begin with the verb [*fi'l*], then the actor [*fā'il*], followed by the object [*maf'ūl*]. The noble author placed the *maf'ūl* first, indicating restriction [*ḥaṣr*] in that it is Allah alone from Whom he seeks acceptance.

[142] He is Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī, one of the foremost jurists within the Shāfi'ī school of his time. He authored an explanation of the Qur'an titled *al-Sirāj al-Munīr fi al-Tafsīr* as well as *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj Sharḥ al-Minhāj* in *fiqh*. He died in 977 H.

[143] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 8)

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī gave the same definition, but added the words "to achieve [*ḥuṣūl*] in the future [*mustaqbal*]" to it. He said: "*Rajā'* is the attachment of the heart to what it desires to achieve in the future while making use of the means."

As for saying "to achieve in the future," if the hope was attached to the past [*māḍī*], such as yearning for a young man who died, then this is called *tamannī*.[144]

Allah ﷻ encourages us to have hope, and forbids us from despairing of His mercy. He ﷻ says: ﴿*O My servants who have wronged themselves! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins...*﴾ [39:53]

In a Hadith *qudsī*, Allah ﷻ says: "I am to My servant as he thinks of Me, so let him think of Me in the way he wishes."[145]

Ibn Ḥajar ﷺ said: "This means: 'I am able to do whatever he expects I will do.'"[146]

Imam al-Nawawī ﷺ said: "The scholars say that expecting the best of Allah is to expect that He will have mercy upon him and relieve him of hardship."[147]

Shaykh Ḥāzim Abū Ghazāla said that the traveller should fly with wings of hope and fear in the skies of purity, remaining in closeness and proximity to the Divine presence, having realised the inspired words: ﴿*Their sides leave their beds as they call upon their Lord in fear and hope.*﴾ [32:16]

He concludes that the people of hope were not all on one level. Rather, they possessed different ranks that were mentioned by Ibn 'Ajība:

> The hope of the common people ['*awām*] is hope for a good end by obtaining reward. The hope of the elite [*khāṣṣ*] is in gaining firmness in Divine contentment and closeness. The hope of the elite of the elite [*khāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*] is in gaining firmness in Divine witnessing and increase in ascension to the secrets of the King Who is worshipped.[148]

[144] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 8)
[145] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 7405)
[146] *Fatḥ al-Bārī*
[147] *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*
[148] Ibn 'Ajība, *Mi'rāj al-Tashawwuf Ilā Ḥaqā'iq al-Taṣawwuf* (p. 6); cf. Hazem Abu Ghazaleh, *Questions and Answers on Sufism* (p. 102)





### 8.2 *Long hopes*

Long hopes—vain desires of the self or ego—says Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, are extremely blameworthy traits. They lead one to work for the prosperity of this worldly life at the expense of the Hereafter. For the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: "The first people among this nation will be saved by detachment from this world and short hopes, while the last will perish by greed for this world and long hopes."[149] The Prophet ﷺ added: "Four things are of wretchedness: dry eyes, hardness of the heart, greed, and long hopes." The Prophet ﷺ also prayed: "O Allah, I seek Your protection from every hope that may distract me!"

Our master 'Alī ﷺ noted: "What I fear most for you is that you follow your passions and have long hopes. Following passions repels from the truth; and having long hopes causes you to forget the Hereafter."[150]

## فِي القَبُولِ

## *For acceptance*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this means 'obtaining acceptance' [*ḥuṣūl al-qabūl*]. The word *ḥuṣūl* (achieving or obtaining) is the implied *muḍāf*.[151] The meaning of acceptance [*qabūl*] is the reward [*ithāba*] for an act that is correct [*ṣaḥīḥ*]. It is also said that it means to be content with something without any disapproval of it [*i'tirāḍ*].[152]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that *qabūl* means to be content with something and to reward for it. As for contentment [*riḍā*], it is the blessings of Allah upon His servant, or His will to grant him blessings.

[149] Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, *Two Treatises: Mutual Reminding and Good Manners* (p. 18)
[150] Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, *The Book of Assistance* [*Risāla al-Mu'āwana*]
[151] The *iḍāfa* (possessive) construction consists of the *muḍāf* (possessed noun) and *muḍāf ilayhi* (possessor).
[152] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 8)

Thus, the meaning of *qabūl* is the blessings of Allah or His will to grant blessings. *Qabūl* is therefore a synonym of *riḍā*. All of this is with respect to [*fī ḥaqq*] Allah.[153]

## نَافِعاً بِهَا

## *Benefitting by it*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that 'by it' [*bihā*] refers either to the *rajaz* poetic metre, or to the *Jawhara*, as mentioned in the previous verse. There is no problem connecting it to either of the two.[154]

The word *nāfi'an* means benefit [*naf'*], which is the opposite of harm [*darr*], and means 'to benefit others.'

The noble author implores Allah, seeking acceptance for his humble effort, and hoping that those studying this text are the recipients of benefit. In this spirit, Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī ﷺ said: "Do not rely on your knowledge, your deeds, and the help of others. Be with Allah, by Allah, and for Allah."

## مُرِيداً

## *For the one seeking*

### 8.3 *Will* [*irāda*]

The noble author intended by the word *murid* every seeker who wishes to read or memorise the poem.

Lexically, the word *irāda* means 'want' or 'desire.' It is said that *irāda* is the verbal noun of *arāda*. Its active participle [*ism fā'il*] is *murīd* (the one who wants or desires), whereas its passive participle [*ism maf'ūl*] is *murād* (the object of want or desire).

Al-Jurjānī ﷺ defines *irāda* as an inclination that follows belief in some potential benefit.

[153] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 8)
[154] Ibid.





Junayd ﷺ said that a person believes in something, is then resolved upon it, and then wants it; it occurs after a sincere intention [*niyya*]. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī ﷺ said that *irāda* represents 'the will to act or not to act.'

## فِي الثَّوابِ طَامِعاً

## *Desiring its reward*

*Thawāb* means the measure of recompense which Allah alone knows and gives to whom He wills out of His own free will and not because it is an obligation upon Him.

*Ṭāmi'an* is the attribute [*ṣifa*] of *murid*. It can also be the state [*ḥāl*] of *arjū'*, i.e., the one hoping. The intended meaning of *ṭama* here is desire or hope [*rajā'*]. It does not mean 'vain desire' as explained earlier.

### 8.4 *Good deeds and rewards*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that in the words of the noble author there is a subtle indication [*ishāra*], namely that good deeds performed for the sake of Allah ﷻ with the desire for rewards are permissible, yet imperfect. The levels of sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*] are three: higher ['*ulyā*], middle [*wusṭā*], and worldly [*dunyā*].

The higher aspiration is that the servant performs good deeds, seeking only Allah's contentment by accepting and carrying out [*imtithāl*] His commands [*amrihi*], thereby fulfilling the rights of servanthood ['*ubūdiyya*]. The middle aspiration is that the servant performs good deeds, seeking reward [*talabān lil-thawāb*] and refuge from punishment [*harabān min al-'iqāb*]. The worldly aspiration is that the servant performs good deeds, seeking honour from Allah ﷻ, as well as a good life in this world.

Aspirations outside these three are contrary to what is accepted by Allah ﷻ and fall in the category of ostentation [*riyā'*], which has different levels as well. This was mentioned by Shaykh al-Islam [al-Anṣārī] in his commentary on Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī's *Risāla*, as well as other scholars besides him."[155]

[155] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 8)

# CHAPTER TWO

## VERSE 9

فَكُلُّ مَنْ كُلِّفَ شَرْعاً وَجَبَا  عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ مَا قَدْ وَجَبَا

*And for every accountable person it is a legal obligation,*
*For him to know what is necessary*

فَكُلُّ مَنْ كُلِّفَ

*And for every accountable person*

The noble author indicates that it is obligatory according to the Sacred Law [*sharī'a*] upon the legally responsible person [*mukallaf*] to have knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of what is necessary [*wājib*] regarding his Creator.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the letter *fā'* in [*fa-kullu*] is referred to as *fā' al-faṣīha* as it clarifies [*afṣahat*] something that is hidden [*muqaddar*]. That which the *fā' al-faṣīha* represents is: 'If you seek a clarification [*bayān*] of the fundamentals of the religion [*uṣūl al-dīn*], then [*fa*] I say to you that "*for every accountable person...*"'

This means that it is essential to have knowledge of what is necessary, for every legally responsible individual from amongst mankind and *jinn*, both male and female, laymen [*'awām*] and servants [*'abīd*], including the tribes of Gog and Magog [*Ya'jūj wa-Ma'jūj*].[156]

This excludes the angels [*malā'ika*], even though they are said to be legally responsible [*mukallaf*]. This is because their responsibility is related to other than investigating and knowing Allah, as this comes naturally [*jibliyya*]. Amongst them are none who are ignorant regarding the Divine attributes of Allah, like

[156] The story of *Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj* is mentioned in the Qur'an in *Sūra al-Kahf*. Their appearance will be one of the major signs of the end times. They will appear after the arrival of the *Dajjāl*, the *Mahdī* and Prophet Īsā ﷺ.





human beings and *jinn* are. This is why Allah ﷻ firstly says: ﴿*Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him, and so do His angels...*﴾ followed by: ﴿*And those of knowledge.*﴾ [3:18] Allah ﷻ did not generalize the matter with human beings as He did with the angels.

As for responsibility [*taklīf*], it is: 'the necessity [*ilzām*] of doing something which carries some burden [*kulfa*].' It is also said that it means: 'to seek [*ṭalaba*] to do something which carries some burden.' The first definition is preferred [*rājiḥ*].

### 9.1 *The rulings of the sharī'a*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the rulings of the Sacred Law [*aḥkām shar'iyya*] are ten. Five are secondary—or declaratory [*waḍ'iyya*]—and five are primary—or defining [*taklīfiyya*]. As for the five that are *waḍ'iyya*, it is when Allah's Divine address [*khiṭāb*] is related to something that He made a cause [*sabab*], a condition [*sharṭ*], a hindrance [*māni'*], something correct [*ṣaḥīḥ*], or corrupt [*fāsid*].

As for the five that are *taklīfiyya*, they include the obligatory [*wājib*], recommended [*mandūb*], permitted [*mubāḥ*], disliked [*makrūh*], and prohibited [*ḥarām*].

### 9.2 *The conditions for taklīf*

There are four factors that establish legal responsibility [*taklīf*], rendering it incumbent upon one to follow the *sharī'a*. These include a sound intellect [*'aql*], maturity [*bulūgh*], sound senses in that one is not deaf and blind [*salāma al-ḥawās*], and the opportunity to receive the call to Islam [*bulūgh al-da'wa*]. If one of these is not established, then the individual is not considered legally responsible [*mukallaf*].

Thus, the legally responsible person [*mukallaf*] is mature [*bāligh*], has sound intellect [*'āqil*], has sound senses, and has received the message of Islam. This is with regard to the human being [*insān*]. As for the *jinn*, they too are legally responsible, except that *bulūgh* does not apply to them.[157]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the *jinn* are legally responsible from the time of birth [*wilāda*].

[157] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 9)

### 9.3 *The divisions of legal responsibility [taklīf]*

- Maturity [*bulūgh*]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that some of the signs of maturity include the changing of the voice [*ḥanjara*], hair growth at the private parts [*'āna*] as well ■ under the arms [*ibṭ*], increase in the size of the breasts, wet dreams [*inzāl*], and menstruation [*ḥayḍ*]. The age of *bulūgh* is fifteen according to Imam al-Shāfi'ī and eighteen according to Imam Mālik.[158]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that excluded from being mature [*bāligh*] is the child [*ṣabiyy*] who did not reach the age of maturity, since he is not legally responsible. If he dies before reaching maturity then he is saved, even if his parents are from among the disbelievers. He does not die upon disbelief [*kufr*] or upon anything else other than Islam.[159]

- Sound intellect [*'aql*]

Excluded from the one possessing sound intellect [*'āqil*] is the insane [*majnūn*] or mentally disabled person, as he or she is not legally responsible. They simply do not possess the necessary faculties of reason to believe in Islam. This is the case if one remained insane until death. If sanity were to return, followed by a period of insanity, followed by sanity again, and this person did not believe and then died, they would not be saved.[160]

[158] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 9)

[159] The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every new-born is born in a state of *fiṭra* (natural disposition), then his parents raise him to be a Jew, or Christian, or Zoroastrian..." (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1292)

[160] Imam al-Juwaynī said: "The second pillar [of *tawḥīd*]: ...It is stipulated that legal responsibility [*taklīf*] be imposed upon the servant ['*abd*] when he has presence of sound intellect [*ḥuḍūr al-'aql*] and is thereby able to understand the Divine address [*fahm al-khiṭāb*]. Otherwise, intending to comply with the command before understanding it and knowing it ■ from the most High ﷻ is inconceivable. In that case, it would be an unbearable [*lā yuṭāq*] responsibility, and this is impossible [*mustaḥīl*]." (Al-Juwaynī, *al-'Aqīda al-Niẓāmiyya*, p. 55)





- Receiving the call to Islam [*bulūgh al-da'wa*]

Excluded from the responsibility of accepting the message is someone who did not receive its call. An example is seen in ■ person who grew up on the far ends of a huge mountain. He is not legally responsible according to the more correct opinion [*aṣaḥḥ*].[161]

Since the call [*da'wa*] of the Prophet ﷺ—or any Prophet who came before him—did not reach him and his people, he is not considered *mukallaf*. This is in contrast to the view held by those who say that he is *mukallaf* because he possesses sound intellect, which obliges him to have knowledge of Allah, even though the message has not reached him.

Considering the condition of *bulūgh al-da'wa*, does receiving the message of any Prophet suffice, even of Sayyidinā Adam ﷺ, since belief in the oneness of God [*tawḥīd*] is not specific to this nation [*umma*]? Or is it necessary that the *da'wa* of the Messenger sent to them specifically has reached them?

The verification [*taḥqīq*] as transmitted by Imam al-Mallawī, from his father,[162] is the position held by Imam al-Nawawī in his commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which is that it is necessary that it be the *da'wa* of the Messenger sent to them.

### 9.4 *Ahl al-fiṭra*

The school upon the truth [*madhhab al-ḥaqq*] considers *ahl al-fiṭra*[163] to be exempt from Divine punishment, even if they worshipped idols.

[161] This means that ■ correct opinion also exists, which is called the *ṣaḥīḥ* opinion.

[162] He is Muḥammad b. Khalfa b. 'Umar al-Abī al-Washtātī al-Mālikī, a master in the science of Hadith. He authored *Ikmāl al-Mu'allim* and a commentary on the *Mudawwana*. He died in Tunisia in 827 H.

[163] *Fiṭra* here refers to a period between two Prophets in which no Prophet was present. An example is seen in the period between the Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, which was approximately six hundred years. *Ahl al-fiṭra* refers to those who lived at a time between the Prophets, or during the time ■ Prophet was sent but his message did not reach them.

However, what if it was said: "How can this be, when the Prophet ﷺ said that a group from *ahl al-fiṭra* is in the Fire, including the poets Imrū al-Qays, Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī, and some of the fathers of the Companions [*ṣaḥāba*]?"

The Prophet ﷺ indicated this when one of the *ṣaḥāba* asked: "Where is my father?" and the Prophet reportedly suggested: "Verily, my father and your father are in the Fire."[164]

However, this is considered a weak Hadith with regard to the Prophet's ﷺ father. The reply to it is that narrations, such as the above, are weakened by being solitary [*āḥād*] or by unreliable narrators—and by the weight of other traditions that express a more authentic, emphatically opposite opinion. This is the view of Imam al-Suyūṭī ﷺ. Moreover, this tradition may not contradict the definitive [*qaṭ'ī*] text in the Qur'an: ﴿*And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger.*﴾ [17:15]

### 9.5 *Sound senses [salāma al-ḥawās]*

Excluded from the Fire are those who do not possess sound senses and who are physically disabled, such as the deaf and blind. This means that if a blind or deaf person is called to faith

[164] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 203). However, as mentioned above, it is regarded as a weak Hadith and it is confounded by too many scholars to mention here. Imam al-Suyūṭī, in his *fatwa* regarding the faith of the Prophet's ﷺ noble parents [*Masālik al-Ḥunafā fī al-Wālidayy al-Muṣṭafā*], says that the chain that Muslim narrates is that of Ḥammād b. Salama, from Thābit, from Anas. However, it contradicts [*khālaf*] [the narration of] Mu'ammar, from Thābit, from Anas, which does not mention "my father and your father are in the Fire," but [which instead states:] "He ﷺ said to him: 'When you pass by the grave of a disbeliever, tell him of the Fire.'" There is no mention of the Prophet's father in this [latter] version whatsoever, and its chain is more affirmed [*athbāt*] as Mu'ammar is more affirmed [in his reliability] than Ḥammād, whose memory has been questioned, and some of whose narrations have been rejected. Hence, Thābit's version from Mu'ammar is regarded as more reliable. (*Al-Ḥāwī lil-Fatāwī*, vol. 2, sect. 68, p. 214; cf. Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine* (vol. 2, p. 143-159); *The Prophet's ﷺ Parents are Saved*)

Before that, Imam al-Suyūṭī cites Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī [from his *Asrār al-Tanzīl*] who said: "And what proves that the Prophet's parents were not idolaters is his saying: 'I was carried from the loins of pure men into the wombs of pure women.'" (Ibid., p. 199)





and fails to believe, he will not be held accountable. This is the position of some of the *Shāfi'īs* and it is the correct position [*ṣaḥīḥ*] as found in the commentary of the noble author.[165]

Entry into the Fire—or into Paradise—therefore, is ultimately only made possible through Allah's wisdom.

### 9.6 *The parents of the Prophet ﷺ*

Having understood that *ahl al-fiṭra* are saved according to the stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*], you should also know that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ are saved as well, since they too are among *ahl al-fiṭra*. This includes all his grandfathers and grandmothers. All of them are saved and regarded as believers. They never fell into the disbelief [*kufr*] of their era, nor worshipped idols or the likes that were prevalent during the days of ignorance [*jāhiliyya*].

This is pointed to in the Qur'an: ﴿*And your movements (are) among those who prostrate.*﴾ [26:219][166]

[165] Imam Aḥmad narrates from 'Alī b. Abdullah, from Mu'ādh b. Hishām, from his father, from Qatāda, from Aḥnaf b. Qays, from Aswad b. Sarī' ﷺ, that the Prophet ﷺ said: "There are four who will conceal themselves on the Day of Judgement: a deaf man who never heard anything, an insane man [*aḥmaq*], an old senile man, and a man who died during the *fiṭra*. The deaf man will say: 'O Lord, Islam came, but I did not hear anything.' The insane man will say: 'O Lord, Islam came, and the young boys were throwing camel droppings at me.' The senile man will say: 'O Lord, Islam came, and I did not comprehend anything.' As for the one who died during the *fiṭra*, he will say: 'O Lord, You sent no Messenger to me.' Allah will accept their contestation. Then He will send to them [the order] that they should enter the Fire. By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muḥammad, if they enter it, it will be cool and safe for them."

And [there is a narration] with a chain from Qatāda, from Ḥasan, from Abū Rāfi', from Abū Hurayra, similar to this narration except that at the end it says: "Whoever enters it will find it cool and safe; and whoever does not enter it will be dragged into it." This was also narrated by Isḥāq b. Rāhuwayh from Mu'ādh b. Hishām, and by al-Bayhaqī in *al-I'tiqād* from [Aḥmad b] Ḥanbal, from 'Alī b. 'Abdullah al-Madīnī, and said: "This chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*." (*Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 5, p. 53-54)

[166] Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said regarding this verse—which is preceded by Allah ﷻ instructing the Prophet ﷺ to admonish his nearest kinsmen and to be compassionate to the believers: "It is also said that this means: 'in the loins of your forefathers.'" (*Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*)

It is also pointed out in the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "My parents never committed fornication. Allah kept moving me from pure loins to pure wombs..." There are other narrations as well, which are mass-transmitted [*tawātur*].

As for Āzar, he was the uncle of the Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, who would refer to his uncle as 'father' since this was the custom of the Arabs. Regarding what has been ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfa in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, namely that the parents of the Chosen one [*Muṣṭafā*] ﷺ died upon *kufr*: this was fabricated and fraudulently placed in his book. This is far from what the great Imam would have said. Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī erred, may Allah forgive him, when he said likewise.[167] Furthermore, how strange is it that it is ascribed to him that he said that the Pharaoh died upon faith? The truth with which we will meet Allah ﷻ is that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ are saved [*nājiyān*].

It was also said that they were brought back to life, so that they could profess faith, after which they passed on again. This is according to the Hadith narrated by 'Urwa[168] ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ asked Allah ﷻ to bring his parents back to life, after which they came to life and believed in him, and were then returned to their state of death.[169] Al-Suhaylī said that Allah ﷻ is able to do anything so that He can specify what He so wills for His Prophet ﷺ from His Divine grace and blessings.

Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī said similarly regarding this verse in *Asrār al-Tanzīl*: "Your descent through the loins of your ancestors, who are called 'worshippers.'" (*Al-Ḥāwī lil-Fatāwī*, vol. 2, sect. 68, p. 199)

[167] Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī held for a period that they were in the Fire. He expressed the same opinion in his commentary on *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. However, he later changed his view, as can be seen from his statement in his commentary of *al-Shifā*, which he completed three years before his death. He said: "As for the religion of the parents of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, there are various sayings [*aqwāl*]. The more correct one [*aṣaḥḥ*] is that they were believers, as agreed upon by the greatest of the scholars, as mentioned by al-Suyūṭī in his three works."
(*Sharḥ al-Shifā*, vol. 1, p. 601)

[168] He is 'Urwa b. Zubayr b. al-'Awwām b. Khuwaylid b. Asad b. 'Abd al-'Izzā b. Quṣayy b. Kilāb. He was the Imam, the scholar of Medina, Abū 'Abdullah al-Qurashī al-Asadī al-Madanī, the jurist from amongst the seven jurists of his time.

[169] Ibn Shāhīn, *al-Nāsikh wal-Mansūkh* (no. 656, p. 489)





Some recited the following:

حبا الله النبي مزيد فضل — على فضل وكان به رءوفا

فأحيا أمه وكذا أباه — لإيمان به فضلا لطيفا

فسلم فالقديم بذا قدير — وإن كان الحديث به ضعيفا

*Allah bestowed upon the Prophet ﷺ a profusion of grace,*
*And above that, was to him most Compassionate*
*He brought his mother back to life and his father too,*
*[Just] so that they could believe in him,*
*and [verily] that was a wonderful honour*
*So accept this, for the Pre-eternal is most Capable of that,*
*even if the Hadith is considered weak*[170]

Perhaps this Hadith is sound according the people of realisation [*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*] by the path of unveiling [*kashf*], as indicated by some who said:

أيقنت أن أبا الرسول وأمه — أحياهما الرب القدير الباري

حتى له شهدا بصدق رسالة — صدق فتلك كرامة المختار

هذا الحديث ومن يقول بضعفه — فهو الضعيف عن الحقيقة عاري

[170] This has been composed by Ḥāfiẓ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī. He was born in Damascus in 777 H., where he grew up and studied. He died in 842 H. and lies buried in the 'Aqība cemetery. He authored many works, including *Ifṭitāḥ al-Qārī li-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

*I am certain that the father of the Prophet ﷺ and his mother,*[171]
*Were brought back to life by the Lord, the All-Powerful, the Originator*
*Until they testified to the truthfulness of his message,*
*Testify! For that to honour the Chosen one,*
*[As for] this Hadith and for the one who says it is weak,*
*He is in fact weak and from reality deprived*

Imam al-Suyūṭī authored many works related to their salvation.

## شَرْعاً وَجَبَا

## *It is a legal obligation*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the preferred view is that the noble author placed the word *shar'an* in the accusative case in order to distinguish something [*manṣūb 'alā al-tamyīz*].[172] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām said that it is in the accusative case with the genitive omitted [*naz' al-khāfiḍ*] as this is how it was heard and transmitted [*samā'ī*] (from the Arabs). The answer is that due to the extensive nature of its usage by the authors its recognition became easy.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the word *shar'an* is connected to the word 'necessary' [*wajabā*], while others said that it is connected to the word 'accountable' [*kullifa*]—referring to legal responsibility [*taklīf*]. The first opinion is more apparent [*aẓhar*] because the purpose here is to indicate that knowledge [*ma'rifa*] is necessary according to the Sacred Law, and not only according to reason ['*aql*]. The purpose here is not to restrict *taklīf* to the *sharī'a*.[173]

[171] In my opinion, Sayyida Āmina ﷺ, the mother of the Prophet ﷺ, should be considered one of the greatest saints that ever lived because she gave birth to the best of creation.

[172] *Tamyīz* is used to single out or distinguish something that is vague.

[173] The intended meaning is not that if one becomes *mukallaf* according to the Sacred Law [*sharī'a*], that it becomes necessary [*wājib*] for him to have *ma'rifa*; but rather, that if one becomes *mukallaf*, it is *wājib shar'an*—legally—as opposed to *'aqlan*—rationally—for him to have *ma'rifa*.





This is the *madhhab* of the *Ash'arīs* as well as others. They agree that according to the *sharī'a*, to have knowledge of Allah is necessary [*wājib*] for the *mukallaf*, and likewise, the rest of the rulings become obligatory when one becomes *mukallaf*. These rulings are not obligatory before the Sacred Law is applicable to the *mukallaf*, neither the fundamental matters [*aṣliyyan*] nor their branches [*far'iyyan*].[174]

### 9.7 *Reason according to the Mu'tazila*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the *madhhab* of the *Mu'tazila* is that all the rulings of the *sharī'a* are established through reason. For this reason, it was stated by Imam Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī in *Jam' al-Jawāmi'*:

> The *Mu'tazila* made reason their arbitrator. This meant that they made it the judge [*ḥākim*]. They intended that through reason all the rulings of the *sharī'a* would be conceived, even if a ruling was not mentioned by it. They said that the *sharī'a* came to strengthen [*muqawwiyan*] and to affirm [*mu'akkadan*] the intellect. They did not negate the *sharī'a*, as this would have entailed absolute disbelief [*kufr*]. They built their view upon the notion of good [*taḥsīn*] and evil [*taqbīḥ*] entirely according to reason.

### 9.8 *The notion of good and evil according to the Mu'tazila*

Good [*taḥsīn*] according to them is what the intellect deems to be good, and evil [*taqbīḥ*] is what the intellect deems to be evil. If it is perceived [*idrāk*] that a particular action is good, so that if its omission renders one blameworthy and its performance renders one praiseworthy, then through reason the act becomes obligatory or prohibited, and so forth.

### 9.9 *The notion of good and evil according to Ahl al-Sunna*

As for *Ahl al-Sunna*, good is what the *sharī'a* deems to be good and evil is what the *sharī'a* deems to be evil. The *madhhab* of the *Māturīdis*, ■ transmitted by the noble author in his commentary, is that to have knowledge of Allah [*ma'rifa*] is obligatory through

[174] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 9)

reason. This means that even if there would be no *sharī'a*, the intellect would still perceive [*idrāk*] it due to its clarity and not because of the superiority [*taḥsīn*] of the intellect as stated by the *Mu'tazila*. Their *madhhab* is therefore not based on the rationalist notion of good and evil like that of the *Mu'tazila* is. The truth is that reason is, fundamentally, not independent in anything.

### 9.10 *The rulings of the sharī'a according to the theologians*

According to the *Ash'arīs*, rulings, all of them, are established by the *sharī'a*, while reason is but a condition for its perception.

According to the *Māturīdīs*, it is obligatory to have *ma'rifa* of Allah, to be conceived primarily through reason. They say that it is not obligatory to know other rulings of the *sharī'a* except through the *sharī'a*.

According to the *Mu'tazila*, all rulings are established through reason.

You have now come to know the difference between the *madhhab* of the *Māturīdīs*, which is that it is obligatory to have *ma'rifa* through reason, and the *madhhab* of the *Mu'tazila*, which states that all rulings are established through reason.

## عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ

## *For him to know*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this sentence [*jumla*] is the predicate [*khabar*] of the subject [*mubtada'*], meaning: 'And for every *mukallaf* it is an obligation according to the *sharī'a*...'[175]

The noble author used the words *an ya'rifa*, meaning *ma'rifa*. In the Arabic language there is a grammatical rule that ■ present tense verb [*fi'l muḍāri'*] which is governed by the accusative particle *an* (to) may be interpreted as the infinitive [*maṣdar*].

[175] A nominal sentence has two parts. The first part is the subject [*mubtada'*] and the second part is the predicate [*khabar*]. The subject of the sentence represents a person or thing that is described in a sentence. The subject should always be a noun or a pronoun, but it is not necessary for the predicate to be a noun or a pronoun.





based on this rule, the accusative particle *an* and the present tense verb *ya'rifa* together forming *an ya'rifa* (to know) may be interpreted as the infinitive [*maṣdar*], which is *ma'rifa*.

The words *ma'rifa* and *'ilm* are synonymous [*mutarādifān*] and carry one meaning [*ma'nan wāḥid*] according the more correct opinion. It means to have firm resolve [*jazm*] about something, which is in conformity with reality [*muṭābiq lil-wāqi'*], with sound proof [*dalīl*].[176]

Excluded from firm resolve is being speculative [*ẓann*], having doubt [*shakk*], and whim [*wahm*]. Excluded from being in conformity with reality [*muṭābiq lil-wāqi'*] is that which is not in conformity with reality [*ghayr muṭābiq*], such as the firm resolve of the Christians in [believing in] the trinity. As for following without proof [*taqlīd*], this is not called *ma'rifa*.

Thus, a person who is attributed with any of the four mentioned qualities, namely: *ẓann*, *shakk*, *wahm*, and *ghayr muṭābiq*, as it pertains to beliefs [*'aqā'id*]—the discussion of which will follow shortly—is a disbeliever according to the consensus of the scholars. As for the discussion on *taqlīd*, the differences of opinion will also be mentioned shortly, Allah willing.[177]

## مَا قَدْ وَجَبَا

## *What ■ necessary*

This means: 'all that is necessary to know regarding Allah ﷻ.' The word *mā* (what) indicates generality [*'umūm*]. Thus, it ■ necessary for the *mukallaf* to have detailed [*tafṣīlan*] knowledge of

[176] Some have said that the difference between *ma'rifa* and *'ilm* is that *ma'rifa* ■ preceded by ignorance [*jahl*], which is contrary to knowledge, while *'ilm* is not preceded by ignorance. Thus, we do not say that Allah is a Gnostic [*'ārif*] but rather that He ﷻ is a Knower [*'Ālim*].

[177] Scholars have said that *ma'rifa* is certainty of something in accordance with what comes from Allah ﷻ, on condition that such certainty is arrived at by a source or proof. Certainty of something without a source or proof is not termed certainty—whether this is in accordance with what comes from Allah or not. (Dr. Auwais Rafudeen, *The 'Aqida of Tuan Guru*)

the rational proofs [*adilla 'aqliyya*] that have been established, or the textual proofs [*adilla naqliyya*] of the twenty attributes [*ṣifāt*] of Allah ﷻ, a discussion of which will follow shortly, Allah willing.[178]

It is also necessary for the *mukallaf* to have general [*ijmālan*] knowledge of the rational proofs[179] which have been established, or of the textual proofs of the rest of the attributes of Allah ﷻ which completes or perfects one's knowledge of the Creator. Likewise, one must have a general understanding of the opposites of these attributes, which are impossible for Allah ﷻ.[180]

In this verse, there is *taḍmīn al-mutaqaddim*, which means that the last word in the verse, 'necessary' [*wajabā*], is connected to the first word in the next line, 'Allah.' This is the second time the author used the word 'necessary' in this verse. When the same word is used in a single verse and carries the same meaning, then we refer to this as *iṭā'*, as previously mentioned.[181]

[178] It is necessary for the *mukallaf* to have knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of certain attributes [*ṣifāt*] of Allah ﷻ. The proofs for these *ṣifāt* are derived either through reason ['*aqlī*] or textually (through revelation) from the Qur'an and Hadith literature [*naqlī*].

[179] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said: "According to the scholastic theologians, *ma'rifa* or *'ilm* is rational knowledge, or the science of the nature of things, derived by a process of inference. Inference is essentially a process by which we move from a belief in one or more statements [or premises] to a belief in other statements, or conclusions, whose truth is guaranteed—or made probable—by the truth of these premises. It is, therefore, a rational process, and hence the term 'rational knowledge.'" (*The Book of Divine Unity*, p. 31)

[180] Shaykh 'Alī Jumu'a said: "Learning this science is an individual obligation [*farḍ 'ayn*] for every person, male or female, as established by the verse: ﴿*Know that there is no god but Allah.*﴾ [47:19]" The obligation here is to know the creed in a general way, while knowledge of the particulars and details is a communal obligation.

[181] *Iṭā* is considered a weak style of poetry according the standard of the *rajaz* metre. There is no *iṭā'* in this verse since the first *wajabā* refers to certain attributes of Allah ﷻ which are necessary to know through the *sharī'a*, while the second refers to certain attributes of Allah which are necessary to know predominately [*ghāliban*] through the intellect. We used the word *ghāliban* since the attributes [*ṣifāt*] are divided into three categories.





### 9.11 *The attributes of Allah ﷻ in three categories*

- *The first category:* the attributes that cannot be understood except through rational proof [*dalīl 'aqlī*]. These include all the attributes that do not require a miracle [*mu'jiza*]—that is, revelation—to prove them, which are: Allah's existence [*wujūd*], pre-eternality [*qidam*], eternality [*baqā'*], self-subsistence [*qiyām bil-nafs*], dissimilarity from the creation [*mukhālafa lil-ḥawādith*], power [*qudra*], will [*irāda*], knowledge ['*ilm*] and life [*ḥayāt*].
- *The second category:* the attributes that cannot be understood except through textual proof [*dalīl sam'ī*]. These include all the attributes that do require a miracle to prove them, which are: hearing [*sam'*], sight [*baṣar*], and speech [*kalām*].
- *The third category:* the attributes regarding which there is a difference of opinion whether rational or textual proof should set the precedent, such as the oneness of Allah [*waḥdāniyya*]. The more correct opinion [*aṣaḥḥ*] is that it should be established though rational proof.[182]

The noble author mentioned that which is necessary [*wājib*] for Allah ﷻ first because of its noble nature [*sharaf*]. He mentioned that which is impossible [*mustaḥīl*] for Allah last, due to its lowliness [*inḥiṭāṭ*], since it indicates that which is negated, and because what is established is more noble. He mentioned that which is possible or permissible [*jā'iz*] between the two since it contains aspects of both affirmation [*thubūt*] and negation [*salb*].

### 9.12 *The definition of the necessary* [*wājib*]

The scholars defined *wājib*, according to this craft, as: 'that which cannot be conceived [*lam yataṣawwar*] by the intellect ['*aql*] to be non-existent ['*adam*].'[183]

[182] Although all these proofs may be extracted directly from the Qur'an, it is preferred that in some cases the proofs be rational.

[183] *Wājib* is also understood as that which the intellect deems necessary to exist.

This is the definition of *yataṣawwar* in the active tense. This means that which is rationally [*'aqlī*] not possible [*mumkin*] to be non-existent. If the past tense is used, then it reads *yutaṣawwar*, which means: 'that which the self [*nafs*] cannot rationally perceive [*tudrik*] to be non-existent.' Some scholars refute this notion, saying that something that is necessary can still be perceived as being non-existent, as that which is impossible [*muḥāl*] can be conceived [*yataṣawwar*] as well.

The argument implies that what is meant by conception [*taṣawwur*] is in fact conviction [*taṣdīq*]. Thus, the intended meaning is: 'that which the self cannot rationally perceive to be non-existent.'[184] It is known from this that reason is but a means for perception [*āla fī al-idrāk*], and what truly perceives [*mudrik*] is in fact the self.

It is preferred not to connect the *wājib* to the intellect, and it is better defined as: 'that which does not accept non-existence' [*mā lā yaqbal al-intifā'*]. This is because what is *wājib* is *wājib* in itself, whether the intellect exists or not.

*Wājib* is divided into two categories [*qismān*]: necessary [*ḍarūrī*] and complex [*naẓarī*]. An example of *ḍarūrī* is that of a body occupying space, meaning, it occupies a volume of space. As long as the body exists, it is necessary [*wājib*] that it occupies space. An example of *naẓarī* is the attributes of Allah, which demand reflection and investigation.'[185]

## VERSE 10

لله وَالجَائِزُ وَالمُمْتَنِعَا  وَمِثْلُ ذَا لِرُسْلِهِ فَاسْتَمِعَا

*For Allah, the permissible and the impossible,*
*And the like thereof for His Messengers, so listen carefully*

[184] An example of this is a car that does not move, and at the same time, does not stand still either. This is impossible, yet it can be conceived [as an idea]. Even though the *nafs* can perceive it, it does not believe it to be true.

[185] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 9)





لله وَالجَائِزُ

*For Allah, the permissible*

The first word in this verse, *li-llahi*, is connected to the last word in the previous verse, *wajabā*. It is necessary for the *mukallaf* to know that which is necessary [*wājib*] for Allah, and likewise, it is necessary to know that which is permissible [*jā'iz*] for Allah, through reason [*'aqlan*].[186]

### 10.1 *The definition of the permissible [jā'iz] and its types*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *jā'iz* has been defined as: "something which the intellect can conceive the existence of at times [*tāratan*], and the non-existence of at other times." It is either necessary [*ḍarūrī*], such as the movement of a body [*haraka al-jirm*] or its being at rest [*sukūn*]; or it is complex [*naẓarī*], such as the rewarding of the sinner ['*āṣī*]—even if he is a disbeliever [*kāfir*]—or punishing the obedient [*muṭī*]—even if he is infallible [*ma'ṣūm*].

It must be noted that it is inappropriate to discuss this with regard to the Prophets, and for this reason, it is not necessary to mention these details except in the appropriate places of learning [*maqām al-ta'līm*].[187]

This is all rationally possible, whilst at the same time we do not negate the fact that something may be textually [*naqlan*]—that is, according to the *sharī'a*—impossible. Therefore, it is known from what has preceded that *jā'iz* (that which is possible for Allah ﷻ) is of two types: *ḍarūrī* and *naẓarī*.[188]

[186] That which is rationally permissible is called *jā'iz 'aqlan*.

[187] 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd ؓ said: "You should not relate to people Hadith that are beyond the grasp of their intellects, lest it be a trial for some of them." He also said: "Relate to people according to their ability to understand. Do you want Allah and His Messenger to be denied?" This applies to some areas of knowledge, such as theology and the like, which not everyone can grasp. (*Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, 2:159)

[188] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 10)

وَالْمُمْتَنِعَا

*And the impossible*

### 10.2 *The definition of the impossible [mumtani'] and its types*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this means: 'what is impossible [*mustaḥīl*] for Allah.' The scholars define the impossible[189] as: 'that which the intellect cannot conceive the existence of [*wujūduhu*].' It is either necessary [*ḍarūrī*]—such as the movement of a body while it is at rest at the same time[190]—or complex [*naẓarī*]—such as Allah ﷻ having partners.[191]

In summary, each of these three categories [*wājib, jā'iz* and *mustaḥīl*] are further divided into two types, *ḍarūrī* and *naẓarī*, making them six in total, examples of which we have gone through.[192] Some have said that it is possible to use the scenario of 'the movement and stillness of a body' ■ an example in all three cases: it is necessary that the body be in one of the two states [movement or stillness], and it is possible that it be in either of the two states, but it is impossible that it be in both states simultaneously, or that it be free from both states.

These laws are of the utmost importance. Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī[193] said that knowledge of these constitute reason itself. It is based upon the knowledge that the necessary is that which is necessary, the possible is that which is possible, and the impossible is that which is impossible. Someone who is devoid of these cognitive capacities is not a person of sound intellect.

[189] The noble author used the word *mumtani'*, which carries the same meaning as *mustaḥīl* (impossible).

[190] Other examples include: being alive and dead, or eating and not eating, simultaneously—both of which are rationally impossible.

[191] Scholars refer to this as being rationally impossible [*mustaḥīl 'aqlī*].

[192] In summary, the rational judgement [*ḥukm 'aqlī*] may be any one of three categories: necessity [*wujūb*], impossibility [*istiḥāl*], and possibility [*jawāz* or *imkān*].

[193] Shaykh 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abdullah b. Yūsuf al-Juwaynī Abū al-Ma'ālī Rukn al-Dīn, the *Ash'arī* theologian, the Imam of the Two Sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina, and the first head of the famed Niẓāmiyya Academy in Baghdad, for whom it was in fact founded. He died in d. 478 H.





وَمِثْلَ ذَا لِرُسْلِهِ

*And the like thereof for His Messengers*

It is permissible to read *mithla* as *mithlu* with a *ḍamma* so that it becomes a new sentence consisting of a subject [*mubtada'*] and predicate [*khabar*]. The sentence would then read: "And the same exists [*kā'in*] for the Messengers." It is also permissible to read *mithla* with a *fatḥa* and this would read: *"And for every accountable person it is a legal obligation, for him to know what is necessary... And the like thereof for His Messengers."* The noble author used *dhā* which is the singular form of the demonstrative pronoun [*ism al-ishāra*], while it indicates towards many.[194]

He indicated by the word *mithla* that it is likewise necessary to know regarding the Messengers ﷺ that which is *wājib, jā'iz*, and *mustaḥīl*. These three categories, with respect to the Messengers, differ from those with respect to Allah ﷻ.[195]

فَاسْتَمِعَا

*So listen carefully*

The noble author changed the light *nūn* of emphasis [*nūn al-tawkīd al-khafīfa*] in this word to an *alif*, which is permissible, as Ibn Mālik said:

[194] Normally speaking, the singular is used to indicate a singular, the dual to indicate the dual, and the plural to indicate the plural. The reason the noble author used the singular form of the indicative noun is because these three categories—that is, the necessary, the possible and the impossible—are interpreted ■ one and read ■ "those mentioned" [*madhkūra*].

[195] This will be clarified in the discussion regarding what is necessary to know regarding the Messengers, in the second volume of this work.

وَأَبْدِلَنَّهَا بَعْدَ فَتْحٍ أَلِفَا وَقْفاً كَمَا تَقُولُ فِي قِفَنْ قِفَا

*And substitute it after a fatha with an alif,*
*When you stop, like it is said for qifan, qifā*

This means: 'So listen carefully [*fa-stami'an*] to that which will be explained to you from these matters, the knowledge of which raises one from the low ranks of ignorance [*jahl*] and following without proof [*taqlīd*].' If it is listened to, understood and pondered upon, one will find it most beneficial.[196]

## VERSE 11

إِذْ كُلُّ مَنْ قَلَّدَ فِي التَّوْحِيدِ إِيمَانُهُ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ تَرْدِيدِ

*Since anyone who follows another in the belief in oneness*
*His faith is not safe from doubt*

### إِذْ كُلُّ مَنْ قَلَّدَ

*Since anyone who follows another*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this verse provides the reasoning [*ta'līl*] regarding why it is necessary to have knowledge of what was mentioned in the previous verse. It is as if the noble author is saying: 'It is indeed necessary for the *mukallaf* to have knowledge of what was mentioned in the previous verse, "*since anyone who follows another in the belief in oneness...*"' Here, the reason why knowledge [*ma'rifa*] is necessary is given.

[196] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 10)





11.1 *The definition of following without proof* [*taqlīd*]

*Taqlīd* is to take the saying [*qawl*] of another without knowing [*ma'rifa*] the proof [*dalīl*] thereof.

The meaning of 'to take' is 'to believe,' and refers to the belief in the contents of the view of another without knowing the proof thereof. The meaning of 'saying' includes both actions [*fi'l*] and sanctioning [*taqrīr*]. Excluded from 'of another without knowing the proof thereof' are the students [*talāmidha*] after having been guided to its proofs, since they have become knowledgeable [*'ārifūn*] and are no longer followers [*muqallidūn*].

Imam al-Sanūsī gave an example of the difference between the *'ārif* and the *muqallid* when he referred to a group of people on the lookout for the new moon [*hilāl*]. Some observed it before others and informed them about it. If they accepted the sighting of the moon without seeing it themselves, they are regarded ■ *muqallidīn*. However, if they are guided towards the signs [*'alāma*] of observing, so that they may observe it themselves, they are not regarded as *muqallidīn*.

### فِي التَّوْحِيدِ

*In the belief in oneness*

This means: 'in the science of beliefs even if it is connected to the Messengers.' The intended meaning of *tawḥīd* is therefore not exclusive to establishing the oneness of Allah.

### إِيمَانُهُ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ تَرْدِيدِ

*His faith is not safe from doubt*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this sentence [*jumla*] is the predicate [*khabar*] of the subject [*mubtada'*], which is: "*Since anyone who follows another in the belief in oneness...*"

The meaning of 'his faith' [*īmānuhu*] is: 'his firm resolve [*jazm*] in the rules [*aḥkām*] of oneness [*tawḥīd*] without proof [*dalīl*].'

The intended meaning is not *ma'rifa*, since the *muqallid* does not have *ma'rifa*. This was in fact mentioned by the noble author in his commentary (on the *Jawhara*), because some scholars were of the opinion that *īmān* is *ma'rifa*, but this opinion is weak [*ḍa'īf*].[197]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī also mentioned this and said that some held the view that having faith [*īmān*] and having knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Allah are one and the same thing, and that this view is refuted, since many of the disbelievers knew that Allah existed—like their fathers and forefathers knew—but they still died upon disbelief. If having *ma'rifa* means that one has *īmān*, then it means that everyone who knows that Allah is One, and that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is His Messenger, is in fact a believer [*mu'min*]. This is certainly not the case. This view was falsely ascribed to al-Ash'arī.[198]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*] is that faith is understood as true conviction [*taṣdīq*], which is other than firm resolve [*jazm*].[199] This is so since the speech of the *muqallid* when he says, 'I believe and I accept,' emanates from the depth of his heart.

The preferred opinion on the meaning of 'the *īmān* of the *muqallid*' is, according to Imam al-Bājūrī: 'the believer's conviction in following the resolve of another, and not his own resolve.'[200]

The intended meaning of 'doubt' [*tardīd*] is uncertainty [*taraddud*] and confusion [*taḥayyur*]. An example is in the saying: 'Zayd came and went [*taraddada*].' This means that Zayd was moving in a state of confusion [*taḥayyur*].

[197] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 11)
[198] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 11)
[199] The difference between *ma'rifa* and *īmān* is that *ma'rifa* is to believe with the necessary proofs while *īmān* is to believe with or without the necessary proofs.
[200] If the *taṣdīq* of the *muqallid* later develops into *jazm* then he is no longer a *muqallid*.





Some found this verse to be problematic as they felt that the noble author implied that there can be doubt in one's firm resolve, while someone who is of firm resolve [*jāzim*] cannot be in doubt [*mutaraddid*]. How then could the noble author say: "*His faith is not safe from doubt.*"[201]

The reply is that the noble author omitted the possessed noun [*muḍāf*] in his compound construction of *muḍāf* and *muḍāf ilayhi*. The implied meaning is thus: 'his *īmān* is not safe from the acceptance [*qabūl*] of doubt [*tardīd*],' or: 'his *īmān* is accompanied [*mashūb*] with doubt, which may be caused by external factors, and not through his own actions.'

It cannot be said that the one who has *ma'rifa* is free from the acceptance of doubts either—or that he is free from doubts which may be caused by external factors—since it is possible that the essence ['*ayn*] of his *ma'rifa* may vanish, and from this we seek refuge in Allah ﷻ.

The meaning of 'the acceptance of doubt' in the above definition is that the faith of the *muqallid* is more prone to accept doubts. It is also possible to carry the word 'doubt' in this verse upon the differences of opinion between scholars [*ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*] regarding the topic (which is prevalent within their discourses). That which follows is the explanation [*tafsīr*] of this generality, since the noble author is of those who mention the detailed [*mufaṣṣal*] after the general [*mujmal*].[202]

## VERSE 12

فَفِيهِ بَعْضُ القَوْمِ يَحْكِي الخُلْفَا  وَبَعْضُهُمْ حَقَّقَ فِيهِ الكَشْفَا

*And regarding it,*
*some of the scholars mentioned the differences,*
*While others verified and unveiled it*

[201] In other words, if the noble author says that the *muqallid* possesses *īmān*—which is true conviction [*taṣdīq*]—how can he then say that this same person is not safe from doubt [*tardīd*]?
[202] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 11)

فَفِيهِ بَعْضُ القَوْمِ يَحْكِي الخُلْفَا

*And regarding it,*
*some of the scholars mentioned the differences*

This section deals with the faith of the *muqallid* and whether or not it is sound. Imam al-Bājūrī said that because of the uncertainty [*taraddud*] and confusion [*taḥayyur*] in it, theologians held different opinions regarding the soundness [*ṣiḥḥa*] and voidness [*'adam*] of the *muqallid*'s faith.

The letter *fā'* in *fa-fihi* (regarding it) is used for causality [*sababiyya*], while the *hā'* at the end is a pronoun [*ḍamīr*][203] and is used as a substitute that refers to the *īmān* of the *muqallid* with regard to its soundness or voidness.

The word *khulfā* with a *ḍamma* (u) on the *khā'* and a *sukūn* on the *lām* means 'differences of opinion' [*khilāf*] and does not mean 'breaking a promise' [*khulf al-wa'd*] as it is customarily used.[204]

Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām said that 'some of the scholars' [*ba'ḍ al-qawm*] refers to 'those who authored works in this science.' He said that the words 'mentioned the differences' [*yaḥkī al-khulfā*] refer to the differences between the earlier generations and the latter ones.

### 12.1 *The status of the follower [muqallid]*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that, in summary, there are six opinions:

- *Taqlīd* is insufficient. This means that *taqlīd* in itself is invalid, so that the *muqallid* [in basic matters of faith] is considered a disbeliever [*kāfir*]. This view was ascribed to Imam al-Sanūsī in his *Kubrā*.[205]
- *Taqlīd* is sufficient, even though the *muqallid* is considered absolutely errant [*ma'a al-'iṣyān muṭlaqan*], whether he is able to find the necessary proofs or not.

[203] In the Arabic language, pronouns [*ḍamā'ir*] are definite and used as a substitute for a person, place, or thing.

[204] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 12)

[205] Imam al-Sanūsī's distinction between the two types of proofs—detailed [*tafṣīlī*] and general [*ijmālī*]—will be discussed in verse 13.





- *Taqlīd* is sufficient, even though the *muqallid* is considered errant if he is capable to find the necessary proofs. If he is incapable, then he is not considered errant.
- The one who follows the definitive [*qaṭ'ī*] aspects of the Qur'an and Sunna is of sound faith, since he is following what is definitive. The one who follows other than that is not of sound faith, since he lacks the safety ['*adam al-amn*] of not falling into mistakes [*khaṭa'*], as he is fallible [*ghayr ma'ṣūm*].
- *Taqlīd* is sufficient, and the person is not considered absolutely errant. This is because observing the detailed proofs is a condition [*sharṭ*] for the completeness of faith [*kamāl al-īmān*] for the one capable of observing them. The one incapable has left off what is preferred [*tark al-awlā*].
- The *īmān* of the *muqallid* is sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*], since he is prohibited from observing the necessary proofs, for it is feared this would mix [*makhlūṭ*] his faith with philosophy [*falsafa*].

How excellent is the saying of some of the scholars:

عاب الكلام أناس لا خلاق لهم  وما عليه إذا عابوه من ضرر

ما ضر شمس الضحى في الأفق طالعة  ألا يرى ضوءها من ليس ذا بصر

*Some rebuked [the science of] kalām and this did not benefit them,*
*And what harm comes from that which they rebuke*

*And what harm does the sun cause when it shines upon the horizon,*
*If its light cannot be seen by someone who is without sight*

The truth that we rely upon from amongst these opinions is the third one: '*Taqlīd* is sufficient, even though the *muqallid* is considered errant if he is capable to find the necessary proofs. If he is incapable, then he is not considered errant.'

It is correct to say that these mentioned differences are general. This means that they apply to the aspect of 'reflecting [*naẓar*] upon the proofs which allows one to arrive [*mūṣil*] at knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Allah' and other aspects, such as reflecting upon the proofs which allows one to arrive at knowledge of the Prophets.

This is in contrast to the view of those who held that the differences of opinion (regarding *taqlīd*) are specific to having knowledge of Allah and do not apply to other aspects of theology. They said that *al-naẓar al-mūṣil li-ma'rifa Allah* is obligatory [*wājib*] by consensus [*ijmā'*]. This was the view of Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām.

The stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*] is that there are no differences of opinion between those living in the cities [*amṣār*] and villages [*qurā*], and those who grew up on the high mountaintops [*shāhiq jabal*] when it comes to *taqlīd*. This is in contrast to the view held by those who said that these differences of opinion are specific to those who grew up on the high mountaintops, and excludes those living in the cities and villages. This was the view held by Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām.[206]

## 12.2 *Some examples of ignorance prevalent amongst muqallidīn*

Al-Yūsī said:

> Two women spoke in my presence [*bi-maḥḍarī*], recalling the sins they committed when they were young. One of them said: "Allah will forgive us." The other said: "He will forgive ■ if He is granted enabling grace by the One Who created Him as well."

Beliefs like this are rife amongst people. Some believe that the Companions [*ṣaḥāba*] are Prophets [*anbiyā'*], and this is considered disbelief [*kufr*]. Others reject the resurrection [*ba'th*], saying: "Who in history died and returned to inform us of it (being a reality)," and there are many more examples.

■ The difference of opinion exists because it is possible that someone living in a village or town still does not receive the message of the Prophet ﷺ.





## 12.3 *Some views in defence of the muqallid's faith*

It was related by al-Āmidī[207] that there is agreement [*ittifāq*] amongst the scholars never to declare the follower [*muqallid*] guilty of disbelief. He also stated that he has never heard of ■ opinion that declared the *īmān* of the *muqallid* to be invalid, except by Abī Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī of the *Mu'tazila*.

Ibn Ḥajar related from some scholars that they even rejected that having *ma'rifa* is necessary, and said that the reason for this is that it is already at the root of our natural disposition [*aṣl al-fiṭra*]. They used as proof the following verse: *(...In accordance with the natural disposition that God has instilled into man,)*[208] [30:30] and the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "Every child is born in with a natural disposition..."

For this reason, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī said that there is consensus [*ijmā'*] amongst his [scholarly] companions that the common people amongst the believers know their Lord [*'ārifūn bi-Rabbihim*], and that they will fill Paradise [*ḥashw al-janna*]. This is how it came to us in the Prophetic narrations and this is the creed upon which there is consensus.[209]

Thus, our natural disposition is to believe in the oneness of the Creator, His pre-eternality, and the contingent nature of all else besides Him ﷻ, even if we are incapable ['*ajazū*] of understanding the terminology of the theologians [*iṣṭilāḥ al-mutakallimīn*], and Allah knows best."[210]

[207] He is 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Sālim Abū al-Ḥasan Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī. He was born in 551 H. and died in Damascus in 631 H. He authored the famous *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* and *Lubāb al-Albāb*.

[208] Abdullah Yusuf Ali said in his commentary on this verse: "As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to what is right and virtue, and endowed with true understanding about his own position in the universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power." (*The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, p. 1016)

[209] The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever says *Lā ilāha illā Allah* will enter Paradise."

[210] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 12)

وَبَعْضُهُمْ حَقَّقَ فِيهِ الْكَشْفَا

*While others verified and unveiled it*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the letter *hā'* at the end of *ḥaqqaqa fihi* is a pronoun [*ḍamīr*] referring to the *muqallid*.[211]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this part of the verse refers to some scholars who shed light on the matter and explained these differences of opinion, one of them being Imam Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī.[212]

They brought clarity on the *īmān* of the *muqallid* and explained his condition, demonstrating that the differences of opinion are merely in wording [*lafẓī*].

As for verification [*taḥqīq*], it means to mention something from the angle of its reality or truth, or to establish something through proofs. The first definition is what is intended in this verse.

[211] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 12)

[212] He is 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Anṣārī al-Shāfi'ī al-Subkī, Abū Naṣr Tāj al-Dīn, the jurist [*faqīh*], the one firm in the fundamentals [*uṣūlī*], the historian, the linguist, and more. He was born in Cairo in 828 H. and was nourished by the foremost scholars of his time: first and foremost his father, the erudite scholar Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, as well as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, Yūnus al-Dabūsī, 'Alī Yaḥyā b. Yūsuf al-Miṣrī, 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Ṣābūnī, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sa'bī, Fatḥ al-Dīn b. Sayyid al-Nās, Ṣālih b. al-Mukhtār, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mamlūk, and Qāḍī 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Sa'dī. He travelled with his father to Damascus at twelve years of age and later held the position of judge in the city. He penned many important works, one of them being *Jam' al-Jawāmi'*, which is regarded as a masterpiece on the fundamentals of jurisprudence. This particular work is held to be the best ever written on the subject and remains up to this day the standard textbook for the study of *Shāfi'ī* jurisprudence at the Islamic University of Cairo.



## VERSE 13

فَقَالَ إِنْ يَجْزِمْ بِقَوْلِ الْغَيْرِ  كَفَى وَإِلَّا لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي الضَّيْرِ

*And they said, if he has firm resolve by the saying of another,*
*It suffices, otherwise he remains at risk*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this verse is connected [*ma'ṭūf*] to the second part of the previous verse, "*While others verified and unveiled it*," and provides detail on the general concept [*mufaṣṣal 'alā al-mujmal*].[213]

إِنْ يَجْزِمْ بِقَوْلِ الْغَيْرِ

*If he has firm resolve by the saying of another*

According to Imam al-Subkī, the faith of the *muqallid* is valid [*maqbūl*] if he has firm resolve [*jazm*] regarding the saying [*qawl*] of someone else to the extent that if the one who is followed [*muqallad*] were to change his opinion, the *muqallid's* resolve remains firm and does not change.

كَفَى

*It suffices*

This means that the *īmān* of the *muqallid* is sufficient and all the worldly rulings [*aḥkām dunyawiyya*] are applicable to him. These include marriage [*nikāḥ*], leading the congregational prayers, his slaughtered meat [*dhabīḥa*] becomes permissible to eat, he inherits from Muslims and can be inherited from, receives from the spoils of war, and can be buried in the Muslim cemetery

[213] In the previous verse (12), the author mentions that differences were brought to light, without providing any detail. This is called *mujmal*. This verse details these differences and this is called *mafṣūl*.

[*maqābir al-muslimīn*]. Likewise, the rulings pertaining to the Hereafter [*aḥkām ukhrawiyya*] are also applicable to him. Thus, he will not be of those remaining in the Fire were he to enter it. He is included amongst those hopeful of success and Paradise. He is therefore a believer, although sinful ['āṣ], if he neglects reflecting [*naẓar*] on the necessity of the existence of God, if he is of those able to reflect.[214]

The proof for this is found in the Qur'an where Allah says: ﴿*And say not to anyone who greets you with: "You are not a believer," seeking the perishable goods of worldly life.*﴾ [4:94]

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "The one who prays with us, enters our mosques, and faces our direction of prayer [*qibla*], is a believer."[215]

وَإِلا لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي الضَّرِرْ

*Otherwise he remains at risk*

However, if the follower [*muqallid*] has doubts after the one who is followed [*muqallad*] changes his opinion, and the *muqallid* subsequently also changes his opinion, then his faith is not accepted [*ghayr maqbūl*] and, consequently, he remains in the danger of the doubt that can negate faith.

Since certainty of something without the necessary proofs is not in reality true 'certainty,' we find Imam al-Sanūsī holding the view that *taqlīd* in creed is strictly prohibited. The problem with this view is that the majority of Muslims believe without having these detailed proofs. How then do we characterize the faith of the Muslim masses socialized into Islam by their parents and teachers? The question is raised because the Prophet ﷺ indicated in numerous traditions that most of the dwellers of Paradise are from his nation.

[214] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 13)
[215] Ibrāhīm Ḥuraybī, *Al-Rā'i al-Sadīd fī Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (verse 13)





### 13.1 *The definition of general and detailed proofs*

Imam al-Sanūsī clarifies what he means by proof and mentions two types: detailed proof [*dalīl tafṣīlī*] and general proof [*dalīl ijmālī*].

As for *dalīl tafṣīlī*, it involves a careful and exhaustive exposition of the arguments for and against a particular doctrine, as well as a thorough refutation of any objections that could be raised. It is a specialized academic process, which produces sufficient knowledge of—and conviction in—the truth of the fundamentals of faith.

As for *dalīl ijmālī*, it is by default at the disposal of the common people. It does not require detailed proofs. *Ma'rifa*, according to Imam al-Sanūsī, is rational knowledge gained from *dalīl ijmālī* and not from *dalīl tafṣīlī*. The Imam stands firm with his argument that *ma'rifa* is *wājib*, but in the limited sense. In other words, general proofs are sufficient for the layperson.

## VERSE 14

وَاجْزِمْ بِأَنَّ أَوَّلاً مِمَّا يَجِبْ  مَعْرِفَةٌ وَفِيهِ خُلْفٌ مُنْتَصِبْ

*And be certain that the primary obligation is knowledge,*
*And there are differences of opinion regarding this*

وَاجْزِمْ بِأَنَّ أَوَّلاً مِمَّا يَجِبْ

*And be certain that the primary obligation*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that there is no doubt that knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of the attributes [*ṣifāt*] of Allah is obligatory [*wājib*] upon every *mukallaf*. Scholars, however, differ regarding *ma'rifa*: is it the first of the obligations [*awwal al-wājibāt*]? The well-known position [*mashhūr*] is that of Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, namely that *ma'rifa* is indeed the primary obligation for the *mukallaf*, since all the remaining obligations [*jamī' al-wājibāt*] cannot be sound without it.

## مَعْرِفَةٌ

## *Is knowledge*

*Ma'rifa* means to comprehend or to have knowledge of something. Imam al-Bājūrī said that the nunation [*tanwīn*] on the word *ma'rifa* is for magnification [*ta'ẓīm*]. ■ is used as a substitute for the possessor [*muḍāf ilayhi*] of the *iḍāfa* construct, which is originally: to have knowledge of Allah.

### 14.1 *The meaning of having knowledge [ma'rifa] of Allah*

The intended meaning of having knowledge of Allah is to know Allah's attributes [*ṣifāt*] and the rest of the rulings pertaining to Divinity [*ulūhiyya*], and not the reality of His Essence [*Dhāt*], for this is not from the necessities since His Essence is unknown, even to the most elevated. The reality is that this is not possible, legally [*shar'an*] or rationally [*'aqlan*]. This was the view of Imam al-Ghazālī as mentioned in *Sharḥ al-Kubrā*.

Additionally, Abū Hurayra ﷺ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Contemplate upon the creation, but not upon the Creator" [*tafakkarū fī al-khalq wa-lā tafakkarū fī al-Khāliq*], for He cannot be comprehended through contemplation [*fikr*]."[216] It is also narrated in a Hadith: "Verily, Allah is hidden from the physical eyes [*baṣā'ir*] just like He is hidden from the eye of the heart [*abṣār*]."[217]

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ﷺ was asked: "How did you come to know Allah?" He replied: "I recognised Allah through Allah, and if it were not for Allah, I would not have known Him." The people asked him: "Is it possible for anyone to comprehend Him," and he responded: "Knowing that one is unable to perceive Him is perception [*tark al-idrāk idrāk*]."

[216] Narrated by Ibn Abī Shayba in *Kitāb al-'Arsh* and by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt* with a good chain of narration according to Ḥāfiẓ b. Ḥajar in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*.

[217] In his footnotes, Shaykh 'Alī Jumu'a mentions that he has been unable locate the source of this narration. It has also been cited by Imam al-Ṣāwī in his commentary; by Ibn 'Arabī in *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (vol. 5, p. 224); and by Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī in *Rūḥ al-Bayān* (vol. 7, p. 63).





### 14.2 *Ma'rifa according to Ibn 'Aṭā'illah* ﷺ

*Ma'rifa* is of two types: general and specific. General *ma'rifa* of Allah ﷻ—which is incumbent upon all who are legally responsible—is to affirm His existence, to declare Him to be Exalted in a manner worthy of Him, and to describe Him as He actually is and in the manner in which He describes Himself. For He is known, even if He is not subject to conditions and cannot be encompassed.

The second type of *ma'rifa* is specific. It has been said that it is a state that arises from contemplation. The Gnostic ['*ārif*] is the one whom Allah ﷻ causes to contemplate His Essence, attributes, names, and actions; while the knowledgeable ['*ālim*] is the one to whom Allah makes that known, not through contemplation, but rather through certitude. It is said that *ma'rifa* is ■ type of certitude that occurs through serious effort in religious devotions.[218]

### 14.3 *Ma'rifa according to Imam al-Ghazālī* ﷺ

Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ is much too great for the senses to reach Him, or for reason and logic to plunge the depths of His majesty. He is much too great for anyone but Himself to plunge the depths of His majesty or for anyone but Himself to know Him. Verily, no one knows Allah but Allah.

He said that the highest degree of *ma'rifa* that His servants can attain ■ the realisation that true *ma'rifa* of Him is impossible for them. Furthermore, no one can know this in its totality except ■ Prophet or a righteous saint. As for the Prophet ﷺ, he has clearly expressed this by saying: "I cannot enumerate the ways of praising You; You are as You have praised Yourself." As for the righteous saint, he says: 'The incapacity to attain realisation is realisation.'[219]

■ *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ* (p. 40); cf. *The Key to Salvation, A Sufi Manual of Invocation* (p. 125-126)

[219] Ibid. (p. 126); cf. Ibid. (p. 40-41)

وَفِيهِ خُلْفٌ مُنْتَصِبٌ

*And there are differences of opinion regarding this*

### 14.4 *Opinions regarding the mukallaf's primary obligation*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this means that there is an established difference of opinion amongst the Sunni Imams and others regarding the primary obligation [*awwal mā yajib*].

The difference is not about whether it is obligated to have knowledge [*ma'rifa*], but rather whether it is the first obligation, ▬ whether another obligation precedes it. There are twelve opinions regarding this:

- Imam al-Ash'arī, the Imam of this field, said that the primary obligation is *ma'rifa*. It is also the opinion of al-Ījī and Ibn 'Arabī.
- Ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī said that the primary obligation is reflection [*naẓar*] that leads to *ma'rifa*. This view is also ascribed to Imam al-Ash'arī. It is also the view of Imam al-Juwaynī as found in *Kitāb al-Irshād*. In *al-Shāmil*, he mentions that the primary obligation is both reflection [*naẓar*] and deduction [*istidlāl*].
- Qāḍī al-Baqillānī said that the *mukallaf's* primary obligation is the initiation of reflection [*naẓar*]. This is referred to as the [*muqaddima al-ūlā*]. An example is the premise that the world ['*ālam*] is contingent [*ḥādith*], and that everything that is contingent must have an originator [*muḥdith*]. Hence, both premises [*muqaddimatayn*] are reflection, and the first premise is the first reflection [*awwal al-naẓar*].
- Imam al-Ḥaramayn said that the primary obligation is the purpose [*qaṣd*] of reflection [*naẓar*], which means to free the heart [*tafrīgh al-qalb*] from worldly distractions (so that one may contemplate upon on the Divine). This view is ascribed to Qāḍi al-Baqillānī as well.
- Some scholars said that the primary obligation is following [*taqlīd*].
- Some said that the primary obligation is the utterance of the two testimonies of faith [*shahādatayn*].





- Abū Hāshim of the *Mu'tazila*, and others, said that the primary obligation is doubt [*shakk*]. This is refuted because we are required to remove doubt, since doubt in any part of faith leads to disbelief. Perhaps the *Mu'tazila* meant that repelling the notion of doubt could be interpreted as reflection.
- The primary obligation of the *mukallaf* is faith [*īmān*].
- It is Islam. These two statements (Islam and *īmān*) are near to each other [*mutaqāribān*] and are rejected [*mardūdān*] with the argument that both in fact require *ma'rifa*.
- The primary obligation is the belief [*i'tiqād*] that reflection [*naẓar*] is obligatory [*wājib*].
- It depends on the time [*waẓīfa al-waqt*], such as when the time of prayer becomes narrow [*ḍāqa*] and it comes first.
- The primary obligation is *ma'rifa* or *taqlīd*, i.e., either of the two. One may choose between the two.

The more correct opinion [*aṣaḥḥ*] is that the primary obligation is *ma'rifa*. The first and closest obligation as a means to achieving the objective—i.e., *ma'rifa*—is reflection [*naẓar*], while the more remote means is the intent [*qaṣd*]. In this way, three opinions are joined together.[220]

In summary, Shaykh 'Alī Jumu'a said the primary obligation is to have knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Allah, and the means to achieving it is reflection [*naẓar*], so this is also ▬ obligation. However, reflection is not possible without an intention [*niyya*] to engage in it. Therefore, the intention is also obligatory. By *naẓar* is meant the tools and methodologies by which knowledge is organised, in order to lead from one piece of information to another. Alternatively, it is defined as isolating the mind from insignificant matters, and focusing it on the subject at hand. When this is done properly, it necessarily results in knowledge. This is an obligation, because in matters of creed, (blindly) following another based on their authority can become questionable when one is fully capable of engaging in rational thought oneself.

[220] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 14)

## VERSE 15

فَانْظُرْ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ ثُمَّ انْتَقِلِ لِلْعَالَمِ الْعُلْوِيِّ ثُمَّ السُّفْلِي

*So reflect upon yourself, and then proceed,*
*Towards the higher realm, then towards the lower realm*

### فَانْظُرْ

*So reflect*

Verse 9 mentioned the obligation upon the *mukallaf* to have knowledge [*ma'rifa*], while verse 14 indicated that *ma'rifa* is the primary obligation. This verse explains how one may attain *ma'rifa*.

The noble author used the imperative form [*ṣīgha al-amr*] indicating that *naẓar*, which is a means of attaining knowledge of the beliefs [*'aqā'id*], is also an obligation upon the *mukallaf*. Allah says: ﴿*Look then at the effects of Allah's mercy, how He revives the earth after its death...*﴾ [30:50] and: ﴿*Do they not look at the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all things that Allah has created...*﴾ [7:185][221]

#### 15.1 *The order [tartīb] of reflection [naẓar]*

Imam al-Bājūrī said this means: 'if you seek *ma'rifa* then reflect [*fa-unzur*],' because reflection is a means [*wasīla*] to it. The command to reflect applies to every *mukallaf*. The noble author [*muṣannif*] mentioned focus on the self [*nafs*] first, since it is the closest and dearest of things [*aqrab al-ashyā'*] to us. He then mentioned reflecting the higher realm ['*ālam 'ulwiyy*] because it is the greatest of all realms, and then the lower realm ['*ālam sufli*]. The reason for beginning with the higher realm before the lower realm is that it is the way that Allah ﷻ has mentioned it in the Qur'an: ﴿*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth...*﴾ [2:164]

[221] Imam Ibrāhīm al-Laqānī, *Hidāya al-Murīd li-Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*





Nevertheless, the actual soundness of reflection does not depend on this particular order. It would be correct for one to reflect upon the self, then the lower realm, and then the higher realm; or at the higher first, then the lower and finally the self, or any possible order.

#### 15.2 *The definition of naẓar*

The lexical meaning of *naẓar* is 'to look.' However, *naẓar* in this context means to perceive something with the faculty of sight [*baṣar*] and contemplation [*tafakkur*], i.e. to reflect. This refers to stirring the soul [*ḥaraka al-nafs*] through the intellect. If what is being stirred is of the tangible things [*maḥsūsāt*] then it is called imagination [*takhayyul*]. It is now known that *naẓar* is a homonym [*mushtarak*],[222] carrying two meanings: seeing [*ibṣār*] and contemplation [*fikr*]. The intended meaning here is the second: *fikr*. It is as if the noble author said: 'So contemplate upon yourself...'

As for the technical meaning, it is the arrangement of two known things [*tartīb amrayn ma'lūmayn*] allowing one to arrive through them at a knowledge ['*ilm*] of something that was previously unknown [*majhūl*]. In other words, we proceed from a known premise, or premises, to a new thought or supposition. This is like the arrangement—or syllogism—of the minor premise [*sughrā*] with the major premise [*kubrā*].

For example: "The world ['*ālam*] is changing [*mutaghayyir*], and every changing thing is contingent [*ḥādith*]." This leads us to the knowledge that the world is contingent, which was unknown before this syllogism.[223]

[222] A homonym is a word that is pronounced or spelled the same way as another word, but has a different meaning. For example: "Adam went to the bank to cash a cheque, and afterwards he enjoyed the view from the river bank." In our text, it carries the meaning of seeing [*ibṣār*] and contemplation [*fikr*]. *Tafakkur* lexically means to contemplate upon a subject profoundly, systematically, and in great detail.

[223] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 15)

### 15.3 *Contemplation [tafakkur]*

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that the quality of our thought is an extremely serious and critical subject for a Muslim to consider. Allah ﷻ has revealed: ﴿*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the rotations of the day and night, there are signs for those who reflect [ulil al-bāb]...*﴾ [3:190-191]

And in the same verse: ﴿*...Those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and whilst reclining on their sides, and who think about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (they will say): "Our Lord, You have not created this in vain, so Glory be to You, protect us from the punishment of the Fire."*﴾ In this verse, Allah ﷻ speaks highly of the *ulil al-bāb*, which are those possessing faith because of their reflective minds. Qualities of this kind are mentioned in the Qur'an precisely because Muslims are expected to emulate them.

Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād ﷺ said:

> Know that uprightness in both the *dīn* and the *dunyā* depends upon the soundness of contemplation [*ṣiḥḥa al-tafakkur*], and the individual who has mastered this ability has gained a portion of every possible good. It is said: "Contemplation for an hour is better than a year's worship."
>
> It is also related that our master [Sayyidunā] 'Alī ﷺ said: "There is no worship [*'ibāda*] like contemplation." Some of the Gnostics have said that contemplation is the lamp of the heart; if it is removed, the heart has no light.[224]

Imam Aḥmad Mashhūr al-Ḥaddād in his excellent book, *Key to the Garden*, defines *tafakkur* as: "the focus and movement of the heart and mind through the meaning of things in order to reach the underlying purpose, and by this, the pearls of truth are reached."

The intention driving this process must be to discover the truth behind a statement, or to clarify the real nature of a belief. We should not be fooled; thinking towards a certain purpose is a skill we have to acquire. It is also important to note that this kind of 'quality thinking' has formed an integral part of the fabric of Muslim life since the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

[224] Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, *Risāla al-Mu'āwana* (p. 55); cf. *The Book of Assistance*





A saying attributed to both Ibn 'Abbās and Abū al-Dardā' ﷺ is as follows: "*Tafakkur* for an hour is better than an entire night of prayer." This ability and capacity to think profoundly about things is the light of a Muslim. Imam al-Ḥaddād compares the human heart to a house, and *tafakkur* to the lamp that provides the light in it. The heart is steeped in darkness without the light of *tafakkur*.

### 15.4 *Tafakkur and its types*

In the context of religion [*dīn*], contemplation [*tafakkur*] is traditionally divided into four types:

*The first type of tafakkur* is that of the common people [*'āmma*]. This level involves the search and discussion of proofs and arguments to arrive at a particular conviction. Note that the requirement or need for proofs before you believe in Allah ﷻ is placed at the most basic level.

*The second type of tafakkur* is that of the worshippers [*'ābidīn*] whose main interest is to know the rewards of a particular form of worship [*'ibāda*]. They want to get on with the work, and knowledge of the rewards inspires them to greater activity.

*The third type of tafakkur* is that of the ascetics [*zuhhād*]. At this level, the main focus is on the contingency of existence. They are deeply impressed by the truth of verses such as: ﴿*Everything will perish and only the Countenance of Allah will remain.*﴾ [28:88] The result of this kind of thinking, which is often inspired by Allah ﷻ, is a complete break from this world. They lose interest in wealth, fame, power, and position.

*The fourth type of tafakkur* is that of the Gnostics [*'ārifīn*]. They are the great searchers of the truth behind the universe and its creation. They delve into the secrets of the names and attributes of Allah ﷻ. They often speak of things that far exceed the capacity of ordinary people. They are also the great lovers of Allah. Love flows from knowledge of the Beloved ﷻ: the greater our knowledge of the Beloved, the greater our love for Him. As Imam Aḥmad Mashhūr al-Ḥaddād ﷺ says: "Knowledge comes from *tafakkur*, and from knowledge, adoration, and from adoration, love."[225]

[225] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *Tafakkur*

إِلَى نَفْسِكَ

*Upon yourself*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this means: 'Reflect upon the states of your being.' The word 'towards' [*ilā*] means 'in' [*fī*], since the word *tafakkur* is generally used with the preposition *fī*, and not with *ilā*. The meaning of 'yourself' [*nafsika*] is your being or essence [*dhāt*], and not necessarily your soul [*rūḥ*], since knowledge of it has not been made manifest to us. In other words, reflect upon what can be perceived, not upon what is inherently hidden.[226] There are, however, various opinions regarding the nature of the soul, which will be elaborated upon in the third volume of this work.

The possessed noun [*muḍāf*] is implied in this grammatical construction. The implied meaning is: 'Reflect upon the states of your being.' This is because reflection upon the states [*aḥwāl*] of one's being is far better than reflection upon the essence itself. The intended meaning of *aḥwāl* includes hearing, sight, speech, length, width, depth, contentment, anger, whiteness, redness, blackness, knowledge, ignorance, faith, disbelief, delight, pain, and the likes of which cannot be encompassed [*lā yuḥṣā*].

All of these states change from ■ state of non-existence to existence. They are, therefore, contingent and subsist in one's essence by necessity. It is only through reflection that we discover the proofs for the necessary existence of the Creator and His attributes.[227]

In summary, we say that we necessarily consist of contingent attributes [*ṣifāt ḥāditha*], and everything that necessitates [*malzūm*] contingent attributes is itself contingent, and every contingent thing must have been brought into existence by ■ Wise Creator—a Creator Whose existence we regard as necessary, and Who is described with the most sublime attributes. As Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*And in your own selves, will you not then see?*﴾ [51:21]

[226] Allah ■ys: ﴿*And if they ask you (O Muḥammad), concerning the soul, say: "Knowledge of the soul is with my Lord. And of knowledge, you [mankind] have been given a little."*﴾ [17:85]

[227] The attributes of human beings are contingent and relative while the attributes of Allah are pre-eternal and absolute.





This means that within ■ exist signs and proofs. Will we omit reflecting upon them so that we never see? This surely means that we should not cease reflecting.

### 15.5 *The one who knows himself knows his Lord*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, We created man out of sulālatin (a quintessence of clay). Thereafter, We made him [ja'alnahu] ■ a drop of seed firmly fixed in a place of rest.*﴾ [23:12-13]

'Man' [*insān*] in this verse refers to our master Adam ﷺ. As for the pronoun [*ḍamīr*] in the saying: ﴿*Thereafter, We made him [ja'alnāhu]...*﴾ it returns to the word *insān*, although it does not mean Adam ﷺ; rather, it refers to his offspring [*banīhi*].

It was narrated: "The one who knows himself knows his Lord."[228] This means that the one who recognises himself with regard to his contingency [*ḥudūth*] and need [*faqr*] knows that his Lord is not preceded by anything and is free from need. This is the most apparent meaning of the Hadith. It was also said that it is an indication of one's inability [*ta'jīz*], meaning that we cannot really know ourselves, so how then can we know our Lord, as was mentioned by Sharīf al-Maqdisī.[229]

ثُمَّ انْتَقِلِ لِلْعَالَمِ الْعُلْوِي

*And then proceed,*
*Towards the higher realm*

This means that after we have reflected upon the states within ourselves, we then move our attention to reflect upon the states within the higher realm or world above us [*jiha al-'uluww*].

[228] Imam al-Qushayrī, in his *Risāla*, quotes Imam Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī as saying: "The one who knows himself knows his Lord." [*Man 'arafa nafsahu fa-qad 'arafa Rabbahu*]. Some attribute this saying to the saint Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh al-Rāzī, while others attribute it to the Prophet ﷺ.

[229] He is 'Abd al-Salām b. Aḥmad b. Ghānim 'Izz al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, the preacher, the ascetic, the poet of eloquence. He authored many works, including the famous *Taflīs Iblīs*, *Kashf al-Asrār 'an Ḥikam al-Ṭuyūr wal-Azhār* and *Ḥall al-Rumūz wal-Mafātīḥ al-Kunūz*.

The intended meaning of the higher realm is that which is raised above us—literally and figuratively—like the celestial bodies in the heavens, the stars, the throne, and the angelic realm.

ثُمَّ السُّفْلِي

*Then towards the lower realm*

This means that after we have reflected upon the higher realm, we then move our attention to the lower realm or world below us [*jiha al-sufli*].

The intended meaning of the lower realm is everything that descends from the celestial bodies to the creation, including the air, clouds, earth and what it contains such ■ minerals, oceans, plants, and so forth. It is through reflection that we extract the proofs for the necessary existence of the Creator and His attributes. Reflect, and you will find that each of these occupies a specific direction and a place, even a measurement; some move to and from, while others remain at rest; some are luminous, while others are in darkness. Some are deep and some are shallow. These are indicative of their contingency, and their need before an All-Knowing Creator, Who is described with the most sublime attributes.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, ■ the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the rotations of the day and night; in the sailing of the ships through the oceans which benefit man; in the rain which Allah sends down from the heavens, giving life to the soil after its lifelessness; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters (amongst us); in His directing the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth, there are the signs for a people who use reason.*﴾ [2:164]

### 15.6 *The definition of 'world' ['ālam]*

Know that the word *'ālam* is pronounced with a *fatḥa* on the *lām*. It is a noun referring to everything besides Allah ﷻ and His attributes, from amongst the existent things and their states, according to one of the opinions.





As for things not yet in existence [*ma'dūmāt*], they are not part of the world, even if they are possibilities—such as the child of Zayd before he actually existed—or impossibilities—such as Allah having a partner.

Some have restricted *'ālam* to things possessing a soul; some have restricted it to mankind and *jinn*; some to the angels; some have included all three, including the devils; while others have restricted it to the Fire and Paradise. There is, nonetheless, no proof for any of these views, as mentioned by the noble author in his *Sharh al-Saghīr*.[230]

Ibn Kathir said that the word *'ālam* is itself a plural, having no singular form. Allah ﷻ uses the word *'ālamīn* to refer to the plural of the plural. Some have said that the word *ālam* is derived from the word 'sign' ['*alāma*], because the existence of the world is a sign, without doubt, of the existence of its Creator and His oneness, as mentioned by Ibn Mu'taz:

*And in everything there is a sign* [*āya*],
*Showing that He is One*[231]

Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī ﷺ has said [in the *Mathnawī*]:

*Where there are questions, answers will be given,*
*Where there are ships, water will flow*

*Spend less time seeking water and acquire thirst!*
*Then water will gush from above and below*

## Verse 16

تَجِدْ بِهِ صُنْعاً بَدِيعَ الحِكَمِ  لَكِنْ بِهِ قَامَ دَلِيلُ العَدَمِ

*You will find in it a making of incomparable wisdom.*
*However, in it, proof of its contingency is established*

[230] *Sharh al-Bājūrī* (verse 15)
[231] *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (vol. 1, p. 131-133)

## تَجِدْ بِهِ

### *You will find in it*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said this means: 'You will know [*ta'lamu*] and ascertain [*tataḥaqqaq*] through it.'[232]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the word *tajid* is in a state of *jazm*[233] because it is an answer to a conditional sentence [*jawāb al-shart*], which is implied.[234] It is also correct that it be in a state of *jazm* as a response to the imperative [*jawāb al-amr*].[235] As for the letter *bā'* in *bihi*, it means *fi*.[236]

## صُنْعاً

### *A making*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said this means 'an astonishing making' [*ṣun'a bāhira*] and one that is original [*badī'a*], so that nothing similar has preceded it.[237] Imam al-Bājūrī said that this is an idiom [*kināya*], which indirectly indicates the contingent accidents [*a'rāḍ*] created within creation [*makhlūqāt*].

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī ventured that it meant that we experience an astonishing creation—one of creative perfection, and a tapestry of such excellence that its attributes could not be calculated; nor could anyone encompass them, save the Creator

[232] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 16)

[233] This means that the end casing of the word carries the primary sign of *jazm*, or one of the secondary signs. In this case, it carries the primary sign, which is a *sukūn*.

[234] The conditional sentence in Arabic consists of three parts: the conditional particle, the conditional verb, and the answer to the condition, which is the result depending on the condition. The implied conditional article and verb in this verse is: 'If you look, you will find.'

[235] The structure of *jawāb al-amr* consists firstly of ■ imperative verb, followed by a responsive verb which is in a state of *jazm*. This construction reads: 'Look and you will find.'

[236] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 16)

[237] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 16





of the heavens and the earth. All this is indicative of the Creator's perfect knowledge, will and life, ■ none of these could ever have been manifested, except by the One described with these attributes.

## بَدِيعَ الحِكَمِ

### *Of incomparable wisdom*

#### 16.1 *Badī' and the perfection of creation*

*Badī'* means 'something invented, the likes of which did not previously exist' [*mukhtara' lā 'alā mithālin sabaq*]. As for the word *ḥikam* with a *kasra* (i) on the *ḥā'* and a *fatha* (a) on the *kāf*, it is the plural of *ḥikma*, which means 'perfection' [*iḥkām*] and indicates precision [*itqān*].[238] The noble author used the plural because of the many ways in which the multiplicity of creation is expressed, each an astonishing and breath-taking facet itself.[239]

Allah says: ﴿*Originator of the heavens and the earth,*﴾ [2:117] which means that He created them when nothing resembling them existed.

Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād said that it was profoundly expressed by Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ in the Book of *Tawḥīd* in the *Iḥyā'* that: "There is no possibility [*imkān*] for the world to be better [*abda'*] than how it is."

This statement ■ sound and there can be no objection to it. When Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ went to great lengths in an attempt to explain this concept, verbal expression proved too limited to express the intended meaning completely. His intention was sound, and the explanation aimed at a noble and delicate end. However, such is the usual pattern when a scholar—who is also a Gnostic—seeks to convey subtle meanings to those who are

■ *Itqān* is used to indicate the level or quality of work. One of the best English definitions of *itqān* is 'to arrange and dispose of things scientifically and artistically, thereby obtaining perfect results.' An Arabic synonym for *itqān* is *iḥkām*, which means: 'to do something with wisdom.' (Faysal Burhan, *The Sunnah of Itqan*)

[238] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 16)

unable to grasp them, that the man of knowledge becomes the target for the objections of those to whom such knowledge does not belong, and who are not well-versed in it.[240]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the import of Imam al-Ghazālī's words were that Allah's knowledge and will are not connected to something other than what exists in the here and now; in other words, this world. It would be impossible, then, for Allah's inherently indescribable power and will not to be connected to the world.[241]

لٰكِنْ بِهِ قَامَ دَلِيلُ العَدَمِ

*However, in it, proof of its contingency is established*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that this is a refutation of some of the philosophers who held the view that all of creation—from the heavens to the earth—is pre-eternal.[242]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that 'however' [*lakin*] is used here to alter [*istidrāk*] what was felt in the previous part of the verse in the statement, '*incomparable wisdom*' [*badī' al-ḥikam*], because if the creation is as described, it could be thought of as pre-eternal [*qadīm*]. It is as if the noble author is saying: 'However, even though the *'ālam* is of sheer perfection, it is still contingent [*ḥādith*].' What was previously stated regarding *badī'*, defined as 'something invented, the likes of which did not previously exist,' indicates that we are dealing with something conceived, and that something conceived can only be contingent, and that one could not conceive it to be pre-eternal—so that the statement would not be in need of *istidrāk*. *Lakin* is then used purely for emphasis [*mujarrad al-ta'kīd*], as in Allah's statement: ﴿*Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but rather* [*wa-lakin*] *the Messenger of God and the seal of the Prophets.*﴾ [33:40] And this is why he used *istidrāk*, that is, for emphasis.

[240] Imam 'Abdullah b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād, *Knowledge and Wisdom* [*al-Fuṣūl al-'Ilmiyya wal-Uṣūl al-Ḥikmiyya*]
[241] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 16)
[242] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 16)





### 16.2 *The contingency of the world*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this means that the bodies [*ajrām*] residing in the world are proof of the possibility of its non-existence. This part of the verse, therefore, contains a possessed noun [*muḍāf*], which is implied.

The implied meaning is: 'proof of the possibility of its non-existence' [*dalīl jawāz al-'adam*]. The intended meaning of the 'proof of the possibility of its non-existence' is the contingent characteristics [*a'rāḍ*] connected to the world, and this is the meaning of bodies.[243]

Someone who contemplates profoundly upon the creation of the heavens and the earth will witness its unique precision, proving the wisdom of ■ All-Powerful Creator. A person of sound intellect knows that every script has to have an author, that every act of striking has to have ■ striker, and that every building has to have ■ builder. Therefore, it follows that this universe must have a Creator Who is Living, attributed with perfect will, knowledge, and power.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an that those who reject faith are blind to the signs [*āyāt*] of Allah ﷻ. The distinguishing mark of a believer is the ability to see those signs and proofs. We know that they are not created in vain, and through them one can realise the power and astonishing design of Allah everywhere, and find ways to revere Him. The believer is someone who says: ﴿*"O Lord, You have not created this in vain, so Glory be to You..."*﴾ [3:191]

At various places in the Qur'an, statements such as: ﴿*Will you not take heed,*﴾ and: ﴿*Verily, therein are signs* [*āyāt*] *for those who reflect,*﴾ emphasise the importance of contemplating, thinking profoundly and reflecting upon the signs of Allah ﷻ. Indeed, the objects one may reflect upon are endless. Everything we see and sense in the heavens and the earth are manifestations of Allah's majesty [*jalāl*] and beauty [*jamāl*], and as such, should be contemplated upon.

As Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*With it He creates for you corn, olives, date palms, grapes and every kind of fruit: verily, therein are signs for those who reflect.*﴾ [16:11]

[243] Imam al-Bājūrī indicates here that the world and that what it contains are ever changing and ever evolving, and this is proof of its contingency.

## VERSE 17

وَكُلُّ مَا جَازَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَدَمُ  عَلَيْهِ قَطْعاً يَسْتَحِيلُ الْقِدَمُ

*And anything for which non-existence is permissible,*
*Pre-eternality is definitively impossible for it*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the word *mā* (in this verse) carries the meaning of 'that which' [*alladhī*], and that it can also be substituted with the word 'thing' [*shay'*]. The meaning would be acceptable with either reading. The word 'non-existence' is *'adam*, which means to perish [*fanā'*].

Everything for which perishing is permissible [*jāza*], it is definitively [*qaṭ'an*] impossible [*yamtani'*] for it to have pre-eternality [*qidam*], certainly [*jazman*], and be without any doubt [*taraddud*].

Here the noble author indicates towards a syllogism [*qiyās*], the arrangement of which is as follows: the world or universe [*'ālam*], from His throne [*'arsh*] to His earth [*farsh*], carries the possibility of becoming non-existent [*'adam*]. For everything that carries the possibility of non-existence, it is impossible for it to have pre-eternality. The conclusion of this syllogism is that the universe—from His throne to His earth—is impossible to be pre-eternal. Thus, we establish that it is contingent [*ḥudūth*], and establishing that it is contingent necessitates that it must have an originator [*muḥdith*]. This is what is required [*maṭlūb*], since it forms the basis of the discussion on reflection [*naẓar*], allowing one to arrive at knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Allah.

This syllogism consists of two premises: the minor premise [*ṣughrā*] and the major premise [*kubrā*]. The noble author omitted the *ṣughrā* because it is understood from the previous verse. He mentioned the *kubrā* in this verse with the words: "*And anything for which non-existence is permissible...*"





In summary, we firstly established the contingent nature of the *a'rāḍ*[244] through witnessing their ever-changing nature from non-existence [*'adam*] to existence [*wujūd*] and from existence to non-existence. Everything changing from existence to non-existence and from non-existence to existence is contingent. The result of this syllogism is that the *a'rāḍ* are contingent. Secondly, we established the contingent nature of bodies [*ajrām*] and the impossibility of them being pre-eternal due to their attachment to accidents that are contingent. Thus, we say that bodies are attached to contingent accidents [*a'rāḍ ḥāditha*], and everything described in this way (attached to something contingent) is itself contingent and impossible to have pre-eternality [*qidam*]. The conclusion is that the bodies are contingent and impossible to be without beginning.[245]

Scholars composed the following poem describing a body and its attributes:

زَيْدُ الطَّوِيلُ الأَزْرَقُ ابْنُ مَالِكٍ  فِي بَيْتِهِ بِالْأَمْسِ كَانَ مُتَّكِي

بِيَدِهِ غُصْنٌ لَوَاهُ فَالْتَوَى  فَهَذِهِ عَشْرُ مَقُولَاتٍ سُوِّ

*Zayd is tall, blue, the son of Mālik,*
*He was in his house yesterday, reclining*
*In his hand was a branch, which he twisted and it bent,*
*These ten sayings have been arranged*

'Zayd' is the substance [*jawhar*]; 'tall' indicates quantity [*kamm*]; 'blue' indicates quality [*kayf*]; 'son of Mālik' indicates lineage [*nisba*]; 'in his house' indicates place [*makān*]; 'yesterday' indicates time [*zamān*]; 'reclining' indicates state [*ḥāl*]; 'in his hand' indicates ownership [*milk*]; 'a branch, which he twisted' indicates action [*fi'l*]; and 'it bent' indicates an action that occurred to a result [*muṭāwa'a*], which is referred to as *infi'āl*.

[244] Accidents [*a'rāḍ*] are abstract, perceptible qualities or properties of something that is contingent, and must subsist in a substance. For example: colour, texture, size, and so forth.
[245] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 17)

## 17.1 *The proof of contingency [dalīl al-ḥudūth]*

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks notes in his work, *The Book of Divine Unity*:

> The proof of contingency [*dalīl al-ḥudūth*] is used to demonstrate the existence of Allah ﷻ and the contingency of the world. The argument is that the world is contingent [*ḥādith*], which means it had a beginning in time, and emerged from non-existence into the realm of existence.
>
> Now, both the existence and non-existence of this world are equally possible, much like the two scales of balance in equilibrium. If we contemplate upon this balance, we become aware of a very important principle: that the scales will not tilt in one particular direction without good reason. There must be sufficient reason for the balance to behave in the way that it does. This is called the law of sufficient reason.
>
> Muslim theologians coined a similar phrase that conveys a similar meaning: 'the false notion that one side can weigh heavier without weight [*buṭlan al-rujḥān bi-lā murajjiḥ*].' It is unreasonable, on the grounds of this principle, to assume that the 'scale of existence' outweighed the 'scale of non-existence' without sufficient reason for doing so. The 'factor,' the theologians argue, that increased the 'weight' on one of the scales, namely the scale of existence, is none other than Allah ﷻ.
>
> The atheist may respond by saying: "I reject all this talk about sufficient reason or weight. The world is pre-eternal [*qadīm*], it existed from time immemorial and will always exist. I have no reason to assume that it did not exist at any time in the past."
>
> The first thing that we observe in this statement is the failure to produce any grounds for the belief in the eternality of the world. In fact, it could be argued that current scientific evidence proves the exact opposite view, that the world did have a beginning at some point in the distant past, albeit scientists cannot state with complete certainty how or when this happened. The second point of note is that the atheist commits the logical fallacy of infinite regression [*tasalsul*].





## 17.2 *The fallacy of infinite regression [tasalsul]*

[Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks continues:]

> *Tasalsul* assumes that the origin of contingent, finite things goes back in time, *ad infinitum*. A tree, for example, originated from its parent tree, which in turn originated from its parent, and so forth, *ad infinitum*. The primary weakness lies in pre-supposing an infinite series of originated trees without an origin. This contradictory character of infinite regression is the strongest refutation of the atheist's argument for a pre-eternal world.
>
> Another example may clarify the point further. If one considers the case of a live electrical cable passing through a house, the first and natural thing to do would be to go outside in search of the switch, or power source, that is generating the electrical current. We would simply refuse to believe anyone who claimed that the cable went infinitely without any beginning. One cannot conceive of an electric current which did not start somewhere at a particular point. Similarly, the world could not have existed pre-eternally without a beginning.
>
> The atheist may respond: "Fine, I accept that the world has an origin; however, it became existent by itself and the world has ever since created itself by the interaction of its component chemicals namely oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon."
>
> In this argument, we again notice the atheist's inability to produce substantial evidence for his views. This is no surprise, for the simple fact is that he did not witness the beginning of things. Let us, however, examine this view in light of circular reasoning [*dawr*].

### 17.3 *The fallacy of circular reasoning [dawr]*

Circular reasoning means, for instance, that we claim that A caused B, and in the same breath that B caused A. The two variables depend on one another for their existence, like the fallacy in which the conclusion is one of the premises. Does this concept apply to the atheist argument? Yes, in fact in the atheist's line of argument is the clearest example of this fallacy. The atheist is saying that the world depends on itself to exist by emerging spontaneously from absolute non-existence. In other words, the world, according to him, generated itself. The only problem with this argument is: how can something possibly depend on itself for its own existence, and at the same time, not exist? The statement contradicts itself, and is therefore untenable.[246]

[246] Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*



# Chapter Three

## Verse 18

وَفُسِّرَ الإِيمَانُ بِالتَّصْدِيقِ  وَالنُّطْقُ فِيهِ الخُلْفُ بِالتَّحْقِيقِ

*And faith is explained as true conviction,*
*And regarding its utterance,*
*there are differences of opinion, as has been verified*

وَفُسِّرَ الإِيمَانُ

*And faith is explained*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that since Islam and faith are connected [*muta'alliq*] to the understanding of 'that which is known to be from the religion by necessity ['*ulima min al-dīn bil-darūra*],' which will be elaborated upon in verse 128, where the noble author says: "*And whoever rejects that which is necessarily known* [*ma'lūm darūra*]."[247] The theologians discussed this extensively in their works."[248]

However, they differed regarding its placement. Some delayed it [*akhara*] until they completed the discussions pertaining to Divinity [*ilāhiyyāt*], Prophethood [*nubuwwāt*], and what has been transmitted regarding eschatology and the unseen [*sam'iyyāt*]. Others brought it forward [*qaddama*], as knowledge pertaining to Islam and *īmān* is extremely important in this science.

[247] This verse will be discussed in the third volume of this work.
[248] Some scholars explained *īmān* as true conviction of the heart, of everything that the Prophet ﷺ came with, and Islam as following the commandments and abstaining from the prohibitions.

Because the noble author took this path, he said: "*And faith* [*īmān*] *is explained* [*fussira*] *as true conviction* [*taṣdīq*]," using the passive tense, 'explained' [*fussira*], since those who explained it are well known. Reverting it back to its original state, that is, the active tense, the verse would read: 'The majority of the *Ash'arīs*, the *Māturīdīs*, and others besides them from amongst the *Mu'tazila*, such as al-Ṣāliḥī and Ibn al-Rāwandī, explain *īmān* to be true conviction [*taṣdīq*].'

### 18.1 *The various levels of faith* [*īmān*]

Know that there are five levels of faith:

- *Īmān 'an taqlīd* is faith that emanates from following what the Shaykh says without detailed proofs [*dalīl tafṣīlī*].
- *Īmān 'an 'ilm* is faith that emanates from knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of the beliefs ['*aqā'id*] with its proofs [*adilla*].
- *Īmān 'an 'ayān* is faith that emanates from a heart intensely aware [*murāqaba*] that Allah ﷻ is ever observing and that He ﷻ is never absent from him, not even for the blink of an eye [*ṭarfa 'ayn*].
- *Īmān 'an ḥaqq* is faith that emanates from witnessing [*mushāhada*] Allah ﷻ with the heart [*qalb*].
- *Īmān 'an ḥaqiqa* is faith that emanates from not witnessing [*yashhad*] anything else except [*illā*] Allah.

The *īmān* of *taqlīd* is for the common people ['*awām*]; the *īmān* of *'ilm* is for the people who seek its proofs [*ahl al-adilla*]; the *īmān* of *'ayān* is for the people of intense awareness [*murāqaba*] and is referred to as the station of awareness [*maqām al-murāqaba*]; the *īmān* of *ḥaqq* is for the Gnostics ['*ārifūn*] and referred to as the station of witnessing [*maqām al-mushāhada*]; and the *īmān* of reality [*ḥaqīqa*] is for those who stop [*wāqifīn*]. It is also called the station of annihilation [*maqām al-fanā'*], because they are annihilated from all else except Allah, and they witness nothing except Him ﷻ. As for witnessing the reality of realities [*ḥaqiqa al-ḥaqīqa*], this is exclusive to the Messengers [*mursalīn*]. Allah ﷻ prevented it from being unveiled [*kashf*] to us, and it is therefore not possible to elaborate upon it.





Note: The believer, when he sleeps [*nāma*], or is heedless [*ghafila*], or becomes insane [*junna*], or loses consciousness [*ughmiya*], or dies [*māta*], will be described [*muttaṣif*] as someone who has faith with firm resolve [*jazm*], and the rules [*aḥkām*] of faith will therefore apply to him in all these states [*aḥwāl*]. This was mentioned by the noble author in his commentary, *Sharḥ al-Kabīr*, as has been mentioned by 'Allāma al-Shanawānī.[249]

## بِالتَّصْدِيقِ

### *As true conviction*

*Īmān* is true conviction [*taṣdīq*] of the veracity of the Prophet ﷺ with regard to everything that he came with which is known to be from the religion by necessity [*'ulima min al-dīn bil-ḍarūra*]. This refers to certain aspects of the religion that were historically transmitted and known through proofs, so that they came to be known by necessity [*ḍarūra*].

These proofs were originally theoretical [*naẓariyya*], but later became well-known and considered to be what we call *ḍarūra*, since the entire *umma*—the laymen and specialists alike—accepted them as part of the religion without the slightest shred of doubt [*tashkīk*].

The intended meaning of *taṣdīq* in the Prophet ﷺ is to submit [*idh'ān*] to that which he came with and to accept it [*qabūl lahu*]. The intended meaning is not only a measure of acceptance within the heart without submission. For if the intended meaning was acceptance without submission, then faith could be ascribed to many of the disbelievers who were well aware of the truth and reality of his Prophethood ﷺ, as affirmed in the Qur'an: (*They know him as they know their own sons...*) [2:146]

[249] Shaykh Muḥammad Manṣūr al-Shanawānī passed away around 1233 H. He was the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar University and author of the famous *Thabat al-Durar al-Saniyya fi mā alā min al-Asānīd al-Shanawāniyya*. He is the Shaykh of numerous well-known scholars, such as Shaykh 'Uthmān al-Dimyāṭī, Sayyid Aḥmad Daḥlān, and Sayyid Husayn Ibrāhīm al-Azhari, the father of Sayyid 'Ābid and Sayyid 'Alī al-Mālikī.

'Abdullah b. Salām[250] said: "I recognized him ﷺ the moment I saw him, just like I recognized my own. Recognizing him was however much clearer."

It is sufficient for the legally responsible person [*mukallaf*] that knowledge of his faith be general [*ijmālan*] in matters requiring the knowledge thereof to be general—such as faith in most of the Prophets and angels—while it is necessary that it be detailed in matters requiring the knowledge thereof to be detailed [*tafṣīlan*]—such as faith in a specific group of the Prophets and angels. The number of Prophets we are required to have detailed knowledge of is twenty-five, as mentioned in the following verses of poetry:

حَتم على كلّ ذي التكليف معرفة  بأنبياءٍ على التفصيل قد علموا

في «تلك حُجّتنا» منهم ثمانية  من بعد عَشر وبِقّى سبعة وهمُ

إدريس، هود، شعيب، صالح وكذا  ذو الكِفْل، آدم، بالمختار قد ختموا

*It is necessary for every mukallaf to know,*
*The Prophets in detail ■ they were made known*
*In ﴿And that is a proof for us﴾ where eighteen,*
*Were mentioned, while the seven remaining include*
*Idris, Hūd, Shu'ayb, Ṣāliḥ and likewise,*
*Dhū al-Kifl, and Adam and they are all,*
*sealed by the Chosen One ﷺ*[251]

[250] He is 'Abdullah b. Salām b. al-Hārith al-Isrā'īlī Abū Yūsuf, one of the greatest Companions. He was first ■ Israelite scholar and later became ■ noble Companion who embraced Islam when the Prophet ﷺ entered Medina. He died in the year 43 H.

'Abdullah b. Salām also narrates: "I moved about in the crowds until I reached close to him ﷺ. The first words I heard him say were: 'O people! Spread peace... share food... pray during the night while people sleep... and you will enter Paradise in peace...'" Elsewhere he narrates: "I looked at him ﷺ closely. I scrutinised him and was convinced that his face was not that of an imposter. I went closer and testified that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God."

[251] Eighteen Prophets are mentioned in *Sūra al-An'ām* [6:83-86]: Ibrāhīm, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, Nūḥ, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ayyūb, Yūsuf, Mūsā, Hārūn, Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, 'Īsā, Ilyās, Ismā'īl, Yasa', Yūnus and Lūṭ ﷺ. Together





These Prophets are mentioned in the Qur'an and there is agreement [*muttafaq*] regarding their Prophethood [*nubuwwa*]. There are differences of opinion regarding the Prophethood of certain individuals mentioned in the Qur'an, including Dhū al-Qarnayn, 'Uzayr, and Luqmān. Regarding Khiḍr, he is not mentioned by name [*bi-ismihi*] in the Qur'an, although he is intended in the verse: ﴿*...A servant from amongst our servants,*﴾ in *Sūra al-Kahf* [65]. Likewise, Yūsha' b. Nūn, who was with Mūsā as a young boy, is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

The meaning of faith in these twenty-five Prophets being necessary through detailed proofs is that were one of them to be mentioned, you would not deny [*lam yunkir*] their Prophethood, or their Messengership. The person who rejects them removes himself from the fold of Islam. This does not apply, however, to the layman [*'āmiyy*], except if they were to reject one of these Prophets after being informed of their Prophethood [*ba'd ta'līmihi*].

The intended meaning is not that their names should be memorised [*ḥifẓ*], which is in contrast to those scholars who claim it is necessary.

The group from amongst the angels in whom faith through general knowledge is required includes Jibrīl, Mīkā'īl, Isrāfīl, 'Azrā'īl, Riḍwān (the gatekeeper of Paradise), Mālik (the gatekeeper of Hell) and Raqīb and 'Atīd. The one who denies any of these angels removes himself from the *dīn*. As for Munkar and Nakīr, the one who rejects them does not leave the fold of Islam. This ■ due to a difference of scholarly opinion with regard to their questioning of the deceased in the grave.

It is also necessary to believe, through general knowledge, ■ the heavenly throne and the angelic throne bearers—and likewise—the rest of the angels. And faith through detailed knowledge is obviously more complete [*akmal*] than faith through general knowledge.[252]

with Idrīs, Hūd, Shu'ayb, Ṣāliḥ, Dhū al-Kifl and Adam ﷺ—who are mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an—and finally, our master Muḥammad ﷺ, they are twenty-five Prophets one must know of and believe in.

[252] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 18)

In summary, *īmān* according to the *sharī'a* means to have conviction in all that which the Prophet ﷺ came with which is known to be from the religion by necessity. The general should be known in general and the detailed in detail. Lexically, *īmān* means general conviction, and is used in the Qur'an where our master Yūsuf's brothers say to their father, Ya'qūb ﷺ: ("...*But you will never believe us,*") [12:17] meaning: 'you will never have conviction.'

وَالنُّطْقُ فِيهِ الْخُلْفُ

*And regarding its utterance there are differences of opinion*

The *shahāda* is sometimes referred to as the 'two testimonies of faith' [*shahādatayn*]: 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah' [*ashhadu* ■ *lā ilāha illā Allah*], being the first testimony; and 'I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah' [*wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammad rasūl Allah*], being the second.

*Nuṭqu* in this verse (*wa-nuṭqu fīhi*) refers to the articulation of the *shahāda*. The one who utters it is referred to as the *nāṭiq*. The scholars of *Ahl al-Sunna* agree [*ittafaq*] that whoever verbally attests to faith, the rules of Islam apply to him.

Imam al-Bājūrī said this part of the verse is restricted to the disbeliever who has not yet embraced Islam [*kāfir aṣlī*] and wishes to enter it.[253]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the offspring of Muslims are considered Muslim, even if they never utter the *shahāda* during their lifetime. A *kāfir aṣlī* who is able to utter it, yet omits it, remains a disbeliever in this world and the next. If he omits it with a valid reason, such as being unable to speak [*khirs*] or because of sudden death [*māta fawran*], and it is established that he entered Islam without uttering it or by an indication which is understood—or the likes—then he is considered Muslim.[254]

[253] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 18)
[254] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 18)





## 18.2 *The etiquette of the two testimonies of faith* [*shahādatayn*]

Regarding the two testimonies of faith: 'I bear witness [*ashhadu*] that there is no god but Allah, and [*wa*] I bear witness [*ashhadu*] that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah,' Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is necessary that *ashhadu* be repeated while it is not a condition that the conjunction *wa* has to be uttered. This is according to what al-Ziyādī has said.[255]

It is not sufficient to replace *ashhadu* with any other word, even if it is a synonym. It is necessary that the two testimonies be in the correct arrangement [*tartīb*] and that the second is uttered immediately after the first. It is also necessary that the Messengership of our master [Sayyidunā] Muḥammad ﷺ be uttered. If a non-Arab utters the *shahādatayn* in a language other than Arabic, then it is sound—but Arabic is better. These are the relied upon opinions [*mu'tamad*] according to the *madhhab* of Imam al-Shāfi'ī ﷺ.

According to the *Mālikī* scholar Ibn 'Arafa,[256] it is necessary that the two testimonies be uttered using nothing else except the following words: "I bear witness [*ashhadu*] that there is no god [*lā ilāha*] but Allah, and [*wa*] I bear witness [*ashhadu*] that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah [*rasūl Allah*]."

According to al-Ubbī[257] it is not necessary to specify the two testimonies in that manner, rather what suffices is any wording that indicates faith, so that if someone says: "Allah is One and Muḥammad is His Messenger," this would suffice. Some of the *Shāfi'is* agreed with al-Ubbī, and they include Ibn Ḥajar[258] and

[255] He is 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Ziyādī al-Miṣrī, Nūr al-Dīn, the jurist and one of the foremost *Shāfi'ī* scholars of his time. He died in Cairo in 1023 H.
[256] He is Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Arafa Abū 'Abdullah al-Warghamī al-Tūnisī al-Mālikī, the Imam, scholar, preacher [*khaṭīb*] and most illustrious representative of the *Mālikīs* of his time in Tunis. He was born in 716 H. and died in 803 H.
[257] He is Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad b. Khalaf, better known as al-Ubbī al-Washtātī. He was a student of Ibn 'Arafa and died in 827 H.
[258] He is Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, the Imam, Ḥāfiẓ, 'Allāma, historian, and Shaykh al-Islam. He was born in 773 H. and died in 852 H. He authored a commentary of twenty volumes upon *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* titled *Fatḥ al-Bārī*.

Imam al-Nawawī. Thus, there are two opinions on the matter from two schools.[259] The noble author inclined to the first opinion in his commentary.

بِالتَّحْقِيقِ

*As has been verified*

18.3 *Verification [taḥqīq]*

*Taḥqīq* is ■ type of verification, which means to communicate a ruling or matter with its proof. This means that whenever one says anything, it is necessary to have proofs that support it.

*Tadqīq* is another type of verification where one approaches a subject matter with proof from a different angle. This means that the primary proof is insufficient, so further investigation is carried out through several other paths.

## VERSE 19

فَقِيلَ شَرْطٌ كَالْعَمَلْ وَقِيلَ بَلْ  شَطْرٌ وَالإِسْلاَمَ افْسَرَحَنَّ بِالْعَمَلْ

*It was said to be a condition like actions, while others said, no,*
*It is part of it, and Islam is explained as actions*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the letter *fā'* in *fa-qīla* is referred to as the *fā' al-faṣiha* and carries the meaning: 'If you seek the details of the differences of opinion regarding the testimony of faith, then some have said it is a condition like actions...'

This *fā'* can also be a pure connecting particle [*ḥarf al-'aṭf*] so that it is connected to the previous verse sentence: "*And regarding its utterance... It was said to be a condition like actions...*"

[259] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 18)





فَقِيلَ شَرْطٌ

*It was said to be ■ condition*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this is the correct opinion according to the *Ash'arīs*, *Māturīdīs*, and others. The majority understood verbal utterance to be a condition [*shart*] in order for worldly rulings [*aḥkām dunyawiyya*] to apply to ■ person. These include the rulings of inheritance, marriage, prayers, being buried in the Muslim cemetery, alms [*zakāt*], and so forth. This is because the conviction of the heart, even though it establishes faith, is hidden within the self. It is consequently necessary to utter it, thereby making it known outwardly so that the laws of Islam may apply to the individual.[260]

Imam al-Ghazālī said that someone who accepts Islam in his heart, and lives long enough to confess the *shahādatayn*—and knows that they are obligatory—but for some reason does not verbalise them, makes it possible for his failure to confess the *shahādatayn* with the tongue to be like a failure to pray.

However, it is said that such a person will not be doomed eternally. This is so because faith [*īmān*] is true conviction [*taṣdīq*], whilst the tongue is merely its interpreter. It is clear, then, that faith has to exist in its entirety before its expression. This is the most plausible position, since there is no choice but to follow the exact meaning of terms, and to satisfy the dictates of language.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever has in his heart an atom's weight of faith will be brought forth from the Fire." The heart does not become void of faith just because of the failure of that person to fulfil the duty of confessing his faith with the tongue, just as it does not become void of faith because of the failure of that person to perform obligatory acts.[261]

[260] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 19)
[261] Imam al-Ghazālī, *Revival of Religious Sciences* [*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*] (vol. 1, p. 231)

## 19.1 *The levels of professing the shahāda*

- Imam al-Bājūrī said that the person who accepts the *shahādatayn* in his heart, but does not utter it and at the same time has no valid reason for withholding its utterance, and is not being coerced to articulate it, then he is a Muslim before Allah—but the worldly rulings (of the *sharī'a*) do not apply to him.
- As for the person who has a valid excuse, and wishes to embrace Islam but is unable to utter the *shahādatayn* except through indication [*ishāra*], then he is a believer before Allah and the worldly rulings do apply to him.
- As for the person who is invited to utter the *shahādatayn* with his tongue but refuses to do so, he is a disbeliever before Allah ﷻ. The worldly rulings [of the *sharī'a*] will not apply to him. Even if he were to express faith in his heart, it would not benefit him in the Hereafter.
- As for the one who utters it with his tongue, but like the hypocrite [*munāfiq*] does not believe in his heart, then the worldly rulings apply to him while he is a disbeliever before Allah ﷻ.[262]

Imam al-Ghazālī said regarding the one who testifies with the tongue, but disbelieves in his heart:

> We have no doubt that the fate of such a person in the Hereafter is with the disbelievers, and that he will remain eternally in the Fire. On the other hand, we are certain that in this world—the affairs of which are entrusted to Imams and governors—he will be considered among the Muslims, because we have no access to his heart, and therefore have to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he adheres in his heart to what he professes with his tongue.[263]

[262] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 19)
[263] Imam al-Ghazālī, *Revival of Religious Sciences* [*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*] (vol. 1, p. 232)





Imam al-Bājūrī said that the text and Prophetic narration that prove that faith resides in the heart and that it is true conviction [*taṣdīq*] include the saying of Allah ﷻ: ﴿*Allah has inscribed faith in the hearts of people...*﴾ [58:22] and the supplication of the Prophet ﷺ: "O Allah! Make my heart firm upon your religion."[264] A minority held the view that verbal utterance is a condition for the soundness faith.[265]

## كالْعَمَلْ

### *Like actions*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the opinion of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that actions—such as performing the five daily prayers—are a condition for the completeness of faith [*kamāl al-īmān*]. The one who neglects them, or some of them, without rejecting them or without doubting that they are part of the *sharī'a*, is still a believer. However, he has forfeited for himself the completeness of his faith.[266]

Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ said that Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī was of those who held the view that actions are a part of *īmān*, and that the latter is incomplete without them.[267]

Imam al-Bājūrī added that if a person were to reject anything that is 'known to be from the religion by necessity [*darūra*],' then he would be considered a disbeliever. He said that the *Mu'tazila* held the view that the utterance of the *shahādatayn* was an actual part of faith [*shaṭr min al-īmān*], based on their view that faith is comprised of actions ['*amal*], verbal utterance [*nuṭq*] and belief [*i'tiqād*]—so that if one omitted an action, he would no longer be a believer [*mu'min*], since he had left out a part [*juz'*] of faith, which is the action. He would also not be considered a disbeliever [*kāfir*], because he has true conviction [*taṣdīq*] of the heart.

[264] *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (no. 1140)
[265] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 18)
[266] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 18)
[267] Imam al-Ghazālī, *Revival of Religious Sciences* [*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*] (vol. 1, p. 232)

In other words, this person would be in a limbo between faith and disbelief. He would occupy a place in the Fire, but would receive a lighter punishment than the disbeliever would.

As for the *Khawārij*, they considered any person to be a disbeliever if he committed a major sin.

The opinion of *Ahl al-Sunna* is the correct one since *īmān* lexically means 'true conviction' [*taṣdīq*] and is used in the *sharī'a*, specifically, as *taṣdīq*. There is no proof [*dalīl*] that faith comprises of actions, utterance, and belief, as claimed by the *Mu'tazila*.

The texts [*nuṣūṣ*] indicate that faith was established long before the commandments [*awāmir*] and prohibitions [*nawāhi*] were legislated; that faith and good deeds ['*amal ṣālih*] differ from each other [*mutaghāyarān*]; and that faith and disobedience can be joined [*yajtami'ān*]. These are seen in the following verse: ﴿*O you who believe! Fasting is* [now] *prescribed for you...*﴾ [2:183] This verse indicates clearly that faith was established before the command to observe fasting. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Those who believe, and perform good deeds...*﴾ [2:25] Here the connecting particle [*ḥarf al-'aṭf*] 'and' indicates that which follows it is other than that which precedes it. This means that faith is other than actions.

This is also indicated in the verse: ﴿*Those who believe, and do not cover their faith with ẓulm.*﴾ [6:82] This is based upon the view that the intended meaning of *ẓulm* here means 'disobedience' [*ma'ṣiya*], so that it is understood from it that faith and disobedience can co-exist. It was also said that *ẓulm* in this verse means polytheism [*shirk*], in which case they cannot co-exist.

When this verse was revealed, it was hard on the Companions. They said: "O Messenger of Allah! Who amongst us did not commit *ẓulm* against himself?" The Prophet ﷺ said: "It (*ẓulm*) is not what you understood from it. Rather, it is what the righteous servant (Luqmān) said: ﴿*"O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily, shirk is a great ẓulm."*﴾ [31:13][268] We understand from this the saying of Allah ﷻ: ﴿*And most of them believe not in Allah, except that they ascribe partners unto Him.*﴾ [12:106]

The intended meaning of *īmān* is therefore *taṣdīq* in the absolute sense.[269]

[268] *Ẓulm* in this context therefore means *shirk*.

[269] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 19)





## وَقِيلَ بَلْ شَطْرٌ

### *And others said, no, it is a part of it*

A group from amongst the verifying scholars [*muḥaqqiqūn*], such as Abū Ḥanīfa ﷺ and some of the Ash'arīs, held the view that verbal utterance [*iqrār*] of the *shahādatayn* is not a condition [*shart*], but rather a part [*shaṭr*]. According to them, *īmān* is the name of the actions of the heart and the tongue together. *Īmān*, for that reason, includes true conviction and verbal utterance.

This view was objected to because faith exists in the one who is excused from verbal utterance, such as the person who is mute, and a thing that does not exist cannot logically be a part of something. The reply to this is that verbal utterance is an integral that may be excluded, while true conviction is an integral that can never be excluded. Upon this view, we understand that the one who submits with his heart, but does not testify with his tongue at least once in his lifetime whilst having the ability to do so, is not a believer.

This view, as well as the minority view that verbal utterance is a condition for the soundness of faith, is weak. The relied upon opinion [*mu'tamad*] is that verbal utterance is a condition [*shart*] for worldly rulings to apply only, and that without it, a person is a believer before Allah as was mentioned earlier.

Note: The correct opinion is that *īmān* is created [*makhlūq*]. This is because it is either accompanied by true conviction of the heart [*taṣdīq bil-jinān*], or utterance with the tongue [*iqrār bil-lisān*], and both are created.

## وَالإِسْلاَمِ اشْرَحَنَّ بِالْعَمَلْ

### *And Islam is explained as actions*

The implied meaning is that Islam is explained as actions. This means outward submission [*idh'ān*], whether one performs the actions or not.

### 19.2 *The definition of Islam*

The meaning of Islam, according to the *sharī'a*, is acceptance [*imtithāl*] and compliance [*inqiyād*] to that which the Prophet ﷺ came with which is known to be from the religion by necessity. As for the lexical meaning, it is absolute [*muṭlaq*] acceptance and compliance.[270]

### 19.3 *Īmān and Islam*

Imam al-Ghazālī said that people disagreed concerning the definition of Islam. The question was whether Islam was identical with *īmān* or different to it; and, in the event that it was different, whether it was removed from *īmān*, and could exist without it. Some scholars said that *īmān* and Islam are one and the same thing; others said that they are two different things that are unrelated, and still others said that although they are two different things, they are closely related to each other.

According to the dictates of language, Islam is the more general term, while *īmān* is the more specific term. Therefore, *īmān* represents the most noble aspect of Islam. Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ said that the truth of the matter is that the *sharī'a* has used the two terms—*īmān* and Islam—synonymously.

The terms 'Islam' and *īmān* could also be used to signify different meanings as shown in the Qur'an: ﴿*The Bedouins say: "We have believed." Say to them: "You have not truly believed yet, but rather say: 'We have submitted.'"*﴾ [49:14]

This means that some of the Bedouins only surrendered outwardly. In this case, the Prophet ﷺ framed *īmān* as acceptance with the heart, and framed Islam as outward surrender by the tongue.

Imam al-Ghazālī ﷺ said that the use of the words 'Islam' and *īmān* as two different terms does not overstep the boundaries of what the language permits. Their specific use as different terms denoting dissimilar meanings makes *īmān* signify acceptance with the heart only, and conforms to the dictates of language; it makes Islam signify submission outwardly, which is also in harmony with the requirements of language.

[270] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 19)





He said that the use of the two terms synonymously—using the word 'Islam' for both inward and outward submission—would give it comprehensive import. The same would be true of *īmān*. With its particular meaning extended to become general, it would also mean inward and outward submission.

This is quite possible, because outward submission—through word and deed—is the fruit and result of inward submission. For instance, the name of a certain tree can be used to signify both the plant itself, as well as its fruit. Similarly, the meaning of the term *īmān* may be extended and become general, thereby making it synonymous with the term 'Islam' and in exact agreement with it.[271]

## VERSE 20

مِثَالُ هٰذَا الْحَجُّ وَالصَّلَاةُ  كَذَا الصِّيَامُ فَادْرِ وَالزَّكَاةُ

*Examples of this are the Hajj and prayer,*
*Likewise, fasting, so comprehend this, along with alms*

### مِثَالُ هٰذَا

### *Examples of this*

In the previous verse we defined Islam according to the *sharī'a* as acceptance [*imtithāl*] and compliance [*inqiyād*] with what the Prophet ﷺ brought us and established, so that it constitutes what is known to be from the religion by necessity [*ma'lūm min al-dīn bil-ḍarūra*]. These include the Hajj, prayer [*ṣalāt*], fasting [*ṣiyām*], and alms [*zakāt*].

[271] Imam al-Ghazālī, *Revival of Religious Sciences* [*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*] (vol. 1, p. 227-229)

## الحج

## *Are the Hajj*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the noble author commenced with the Hajj in order to maintain the rhythm of the poetic metre; this despite the fact that prayer is better [*afḍal*], and that a group of scholars declared that the one who refuses to pray due to laziness, after being ordered to do so by the Imam, to be a disbeliever.[272] Fasting is also considered better than the Hajj, according to the relied upon opinion [*mu'tamad*].

### 20.1 *The hierarchy of worship*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the five daily prayers [*ṣalāwāt al-khams*] are the best of the outward forms of worship of the body [*'ibādāt badaniyya ẓāhira*]. This is followed by fasting, Hajj, and alms. The obligatory of these [*furūḍ*] are better than the optional [*nawāfil*]. The best of the prescribed prayers is the Friday prayer [*ṣalāt al-jumu'a*], then Friday's *'aṣr* (afternoon) prayer, then any other *'aṣr* prayer. This is followed in rank by Friday's *ṣubḥ* (morning) prayer, then by any other *ṣubḥ* prayer, then by *'ishā'* (evening), *ẓuhr* (noon), and *maghrib* (sunset) prayers. Some say that these last three are equal and that their performance on the day of *jumu'a* does not give them a higher rank. The best congregational prayer is Friday prayer, then the congregational prayer of *ṣubḥ* on Friday, then any other congregational *ṣubḥ* prayer, then the congregational prayer of *'ishā'*, then the congregational prayer of *'aṣr*, then the congregational prayer of *ẓuhr*, and then the congregational prayer of *maghrib*. As for the best inward forms of worship of the body [*'ibādāt badaniyya bāṭina*], which include contemplation [*tafakkur*], patience [*ṣabr*], contentment with the Divine decree of Allah, and so forth, these are better than the outward forms of worship of the body. It was narrated: "Contemplation for ■ hour is better than two years of worship." The best of all ■ faith [*īmān*].[273]

[272] This is one of the views within the *Ḥanbalī* school. The vast majority agree that if a Muslim neglects the prayer out of laziness [*kasl*], while believing that the prayer is obligatory, he is considered a transgressor [*fāsiq*] but still a Muslim. This means that neglecting the obligatory prayer out of laziness, even if continuously, does not entail disbelief according to the vast majority of scholars—as long as one firmly believes in the obligation of the prayer, and does not treat it with disdain [*istikhfāf*].





### 20.2 *The definition of Hajj*

The lexical meaning of 'Hajj' is 'intent' or 'purpose' [*qaṣd*]. In the *shari'a*, it means the specific intent to travel to Mecca to perform the act of worship of circumambulation of the Ka'ba [*ṭawāf*] and the rest of the rites during the months of Hajj, in response to the command of Allah and seeking His contentment.

Alternatively, it is defined as a visit to a specific place, at a specific time, and for a specific purpose. The specific place is the Ka'ba and 'Arafa; the specific time is the months of Hajj, which are *Shawwāl*, *Dhū al-qa'da*, and the first ten days of *Dhū al-ḥijja*; and the specific purpose is to come in a state of *iḥrām* to a certain place with the intention of performing the Hajj.

### 20.3 *When Hajj was made obligatory*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that there are differences of opinion regarding when the Hajj was made obligatory. Some scholars have said that it was made obligatory before the *hijra*, after this verse was revealed: ﴿*And Hajj to the House ■ a duty that mankind owes to Allah...*﴾ [3:97]

Others have said that Hajj was made obligatory after the *hijra*. Those who hold this opinion state that it was either during the fifth or sixth year. The correct opinion, according to the *Shāfi'īs*, is that it was the sixth year. Others have said that the Hajj was made obligatory during the seventh or eighth year. However, Ibn Kamāl regards the ninth year as the correct opinion.[274]

[273] *Hāshiya al-Bājūrī 'alā Sharḥ Ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī*

[274] He is Aḥmad b. Sulaymān b. Kamāl Pāshā, Shams al-Dīn, Qāḍi of the scholars in Hadith and its narrators. He died in 940 H. and some said 932 H. He authored numerous works, such the famous *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā* and *Ṭabaqāt al-Mujtahidīn*.

## وَالصَّلَاةُ

## *And prayer*

### 20.4 *The definition of prayer [ṣalāt]*

The lexical meaning of *ṣalāt* is 'supplication' [*duʿā'*]. Some have said that it means 'supplication of goodness [*khayr*].' In the *sharīʿa* it means worshipping Allah ﷻ by means of particular prescribed statements [*aqwāl*] and actions [*afʿāl*] in a particular order at particular prescribed times, beginning with the *takbīr* [*Allahu Akbar*] and ending with the *taslīm* [*al-salāmu ʿalaykum*].

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is either derived from *waṣl* ('to connect') ■ it connects the servant to his Lord; or it is derived from the word *ṣalli*, which means 'to burn' or 'straighten' as in: 'I burnt [*ṣalaytu*] the aloes wood [*ʿūd*] with the aid of fire [*nār*].' Like the fire changes the aloes wood, the prayer corrects the wrongful behaviour of the servant and deters him from sinful behaviour. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, prayer restrains from shameful and wrongful deeds.*﴾ [29:45]

It was narrated that a young man from the *Anṣār* would often pray all five daily prayers with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but would also perform numerous bad deeds. When his wayward behaviour was described, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, *ṣalāt* will prevent him from it one day." This person eventually repented and did so with such excellence that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Did I not inform you that prayer would prevent him one day?"

Some of the exegetes said that *ṣalāt* is the feast of those who worship Allah ﷻ since it combines various acts of worship, just as a feast combines a variety of foods. When the servant performs two cycles of prayer [*rakʿatayn*], Allah ﷻ says: "My servant, with all his shortcomings, attends to Me with various forms of worship, including: standing, bowing, prostrating, recitation, *tahlīl* [*lā ilāha illā Allah*], *taḥmīd* [*al-ḥamdulillah*], *takbīr*, and *salām*.

Ibn Kamāl Pāshā has also written ■ epistle on *The Differences between the Ashʿarīs and Maturidis* [*Risāla al-Ikhtilāf bayn al-Ashāʿira wal-Māturīdiyya*]; Shaykh Saʿīd Foudah wrote an excellent commentary on this work.





"By My majesty and My greatness, I will not prevent you from entering My Paradise in which there is ■ variety of the most pleasurable delicacies. I will bestow upon you a variety of its delicacies just as you worshipped Me with various forms worship. I will honour you with My beatific vision since you have come to know Me through My oneness. Verily, I am the Pure and Subtle [*al-Laṭīf*], Who accepts your excuses and your good deeds through My mercy [*raḥma*]. I have denied it for the disbelievers and given them the Fire instead. You [My servant] did not worship anyone except Me, so I have forgiven your sins. For every cycle of prayer you have performed, I have given you a palace in Paradise with fair maidens, and for every prostration your reward is the vision of your Lord."

### 20.5 *When prayer was made obligatory*

You should know that *ṣalāt* was made obligatory one year before the *hijra*. The strongest view is that prayer was not made obligatory upon the Prophet ﷺ before it. It was also said that what was obligatory before the *hijra* was two cycles of prayer in the morning and two cycles of prayer in the evening. The five daily prayers were not made obligatory until the night his ﷺ journey [*isrā'*].

## كَذَا الصِّيَامُ

## *Likewise, fasting*

This means that fasting [*ṣiyām*] is like the Hajj and *ṣalāt* (with respect to its being obligatory).

### 20.6 *The definition of fasting [ṣiyām]*

The lexical meaning of *ṣiyām* is 'to abstain' even if only from speech. Allah ﷻ indicates this when mentioning the story of Maryam: ﴿*"Verily, I have vowed, to the most Merciful, abstention."*﴾ [19:26] In the *sharīʿa*, it means to abstain from specific things, at a specific time, by a specific person, with a specific intention.

### 20.7 *When fasting was made obligatory*

It was made obligatory in the month of Sha'bān during the second year after *hijra*. There are numerous opinions regarding whether or not any obligatory fasting was prescribed before this, and later abrogated. The first opinion states that the early Muslims fasted on the day of *'Āshūrā'*, [the tenth day of the month of Muharram]. It was said that they fasted for three days every month. Some said that they fasted for three days every month including the day of *'Āshūrā'*.

You should know that the Prophet ﷺ fasted for nine months of Ramadan, one of which was complete [*kāmil*] according to the *mu'tamad*. According to al-Damīrī,[275] he ﷺ completed two, while others said he completed five.[276]

فَادْرِ

*So comprehend this*

*Fa-idri* means 'know with comprehension [*dirāya*],' which means [to have] knowledge.[277]

وَالزَّكَاةُ

*Along with alms*

[275] He is Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. 'Īsā Abū al-Baqā' Kamāl al-Dīn. He was a thinker, a zoologist, and a researcher, and well respected amongst the *Shāfi'ī* jurists. He was born in 742 H. and died in 808 H. He authored the work *Life of the Animals*, and many other important texts and treatises.

[276] The wisdom behind these incomplete months, according to Imam al-Bājūrī, was to console the hearts of those who were not yet capable of completing the fast, due to valid reasons such as warfare, sickness, and so forth. [*Ḥāshiya al-Bājūrī 'alā Sharḥ Ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī*]

[277] This term is also used in the science Hadith. Therein, *dirāya* is branch that discusses the rules of narrating a Hadith, the grading of the Hadith, the reliability of the narrators and the deduction of legislation therefrom. For a discussion on *dirāya*, see: *An Explanation of the Bayquni Poem* (p. 30-35) by Imam 'Abdallah Sirājuddīn.





### 20.8 *The definition of alms [zakāt]*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *zakāt* is an infinitive [*ism al-maṣdar*] of the verb *tazkiya*, which means 'to purify' and 'to praise.'[278]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī wrote that *zakāt* means 'to grow' and 'to increase.' When it is said about a person, it means 'to improve' or 'to become better.' Consequently, *zakāt* is a blessing, but also a process of growth, cleanliness, and betterment. In *Lisān al-'Arab*, it states: "The root of the word *zakāt* in Arabic means 'cleanliness, growth, blessing, and praise.'" All these meanings of the word are used in the Qur'an and Hadith. In the *shari'a*, it refers to the determined share of wealth prescribed by Allah ﷻ to be distributed among deserving categories of the less fortunate.[279]

### 20.9 *When zakāt was made obligatory*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *zakāt* was made obligatory during the second year after *hijra*, after the alms at the end of Ramadan [*zakāt al-fiṭr*]. Some have said that it was made obligatory during the fourth year, while others said that it was before the *hijra*.[280]

## VERSE 21

وَرُجِّحَتْ زِيَادَةُ الإِيمَانِ بِمَا تَزِيدُ طَاعَةُ الإِنْسَانِ

*And the stronger opinion is that faith increases,*
*Due to an increase in the obedience of the human being*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that it was previously mentioned that the observance of religious duties of the body relate to the completeness of faith [*kamāl al-īmān*]. The one who has true conviction [*taṣdīq*] of the heart and utters the two testimonies of faith [*shahādatayn*] with his tongue, but falls short of observing the religious duties ['*amal*] with his body, is said to be a deficient believer [*mu'min nāqiṣ*]. Since the noble author's discussion

[278] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 20)

[279] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāt* (p. 39)

[280] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 20)

relates to the perfection of faith, he went on to clarify the opinions regarding an increase of faith [*ziyāda al-īmān*] due to an increase of good deeds, and a decrease of faith [*naqṣ al-īmān*] due to a decrease in good deeds. Thus, he went on to say:

## وَرُجِّحَتْ زِيَادَةُ الإِيمَانِ

### *And the stronger opinion is that faith increases*

The *tarjīḥ*[281] of the vast majority of the Ash'arīs, Māturidīs, the Mālikīs, the Shāfi'īs, and the followers of Imam Aḥmad, is that faith increases as the observance of religious duties of the body increases. Their proofs are established through the intellect [*'aql*] and the text [*naql*].[282]

21.1 *The rational and textual proof for the increase of faith*

The rational proof is that the faith of the Prophets, angels, rightly guided successors [*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*], and the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, cannot be equal to the faith of the oppressor and sinner; they must vary in degree.[283]

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*He it is Who sent down the spirit of tranquillity into the hearts of the believers, that they may increase in faith upon faith,*﴾ [48:4] and: ﴿*And when His āyāt are recited unto them, their faith increases,*﴾ [8:2] and: ﴿*And when a Sūra is revealed, there are amongst the hypocrites those who say: "Which of you has this increased in faith?" As for those who believe, it has increased them in faith, while they are rejoicing.*﴾ [9:124]

[281] *Tarjīḥ* means weighing the various opinions of higher ranking *mujtahidīn* on particular issues, and giving preference to one over others.

[282] Imam Abū Ḥanīfa ﷺ was of the opinion that *īmān* does not fluctuate since it is firm resolve [*jazm*] and true conviction [*taṣdīq*]. It does not increase due to the performance of good deeds, nor does it decrease due to disobedience. He said that our faith is like the faith of Jibrīl ﷺ. Some of the *Māturidīs* followed his opinion and it was likewise the preferred opinion of Imam al-Ḥaramayn. (Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Fiqh al-Akbar*, p. 126-127; Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*)

[283] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 21)





As for the narrations (which are regarded as weak), Ibn 'Umar ﷺ reportedly asked the Prophet ﷺ: "Does faith increase and decrease?" He replied: "Yes, it increases until one enters Paradise and it decreases until one enters Hell."[284] It is also narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "If the faith of Abū Bakr was weighed against the faith of all the people of the earth, the former would outweigh the latter."[285]

Our master 'Umar ﷺ also said regarding his ﷺ Companion and intimate friend, our master Abū Bakr: "How I wish that all my deeds in life were equal to one day and night of Abū Bakr."[286] 'Umar ﷺ intended by 'day and night' the day the Messenger ﷺ passed away and the night he spent in the cave with him ﷺ, since he was elevated in it. Indeed, Abū Bakr ﷺ was an enormous strength for the people on the day the Messenger ﷺ passed away.

In addition to this, a person can reach the station of witnessing [*mushāhada*] within himself if he increases in obedience [*ṭā'a*], remembrance [*dhikr*], and turning towards Allah ﷻ, so that he finds in himself mercy and light—but this cannot happen except if there is an increase in obedience to Allah ﷻ.

## بِمَا تَزِيدُ طَاعَةُ الإِنْسَانِ

### *Due to an increase in the obedience of the human being*

This is how it is, except that the increase in faith is in reality only by the grace of Allah and not because of the obedience of the servant.[287]

[284] None of the narrations regarding the increase and decrease of faith are considered sound according to the majority of scholars.

[285] This was rather a saying of 'Umar ﷺ.
(Al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, p. 36)

[286] It should be noted here that 'Umar ﷺ used the words 'my deeds' and not 'my faith' or 'my conviction,' and these are some of the proofs in favour of Abū Ḥanīfa and those who follow his opinion.

[287] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 21)

## VERSE 22

وَنَقْصُهُ بِنَقْصِهَا وَقِيلَ لاَ  وَقِيلَ لاَ خُلْفَ كَذَا قَدْ نُقِلا

*And it decreases due to ■ decrease of it,*
*and some said that it does not,*
*Yet others said there is no disagreement,*
*■ has been transmitted*

وَقِيلَ لاَ

*And some said that it does not*

### 22.1 *Faith neither increases nor decreases according to Abū Ḥanīfa*

According to Abū Ḥanīfa and some of his learned companions, faith does not increase nor does it decrease. Faith remains constant: it is either present or it is not present. Nonetheless, one's God-fearing [*taqwā*] may increase or decrease. They maintain that 'increase' in the verses on which the theologians base their views are relative to the issues in question accordance with their contexts.

The verses cited as proof, according to them, have only described the attitudes of the Companions when they were informed by the Prophet ﷺ of what has been revealed. According to them, faith means to be certain of something. Take for example Table Mountain, which is situated in Cape Town; if one believes that it is in Cape Town, can the belief that Table Mountain is in Cape Town increase or decrease?

Al-Taftāzānī said that faith [*īmān*] is true conviction [*taṣdīq*] of the heart, which reaches the point of affirmation and acknowledgment.[288]

[288] Al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* [*Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyya*] (p. 116-117)





In this no decrease or increase is conceivable, so whoever attains to the real essence of this conviction—whether he does good deeds or commits disobedient acts—his *taṣdīq* continues to remain in a state in which there is no change at all. Al-Taftāzānī noted that it had been suggested that the meaning of 'increase in faith' is the increase of the fruits of faith—and the shining of it in the heart due to their lights and brilliance—for the actual fruits increased through good deeds and decreased through disobedient acts.[289]

### 22.2 *Abū Ḥanīfa's interpretation of the verses that indicate an increase in faith*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*And when His verses* [*āyāt*] *are recited unto them, their faith increases.*﴾ [8:2] The great Imam, Abū Ḥanīfa, said this verse means that the early Muslims believed in Allah's signs [*āyāt*]. In this way, their faith was continuously revitalized through the Qur'an and its rulings as they came down stage by stage, so that whenever ■ ruling was added, they were increased in faith by it.

For instance, when a verse indicating oneness was revealed, the Companions believed in it; and when a verse of establishing prayer was revealed, they believed in it; and when a verse establishing alms [*zakāt*] was revealed, they believed ■ it. In this way, whenever ■ verse was revealed, faith evolved and became more complete.

Abū Ḥanīfa, and those who follow him in this matter, argue that those verses which indicate an increase in *īmān* may be interpreted by the early Muslims as general, and then, as one command after another was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, the *imān* of the Companions increased. The point is that this increase in faith is confined to the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

In summary, Abū Ḥanīfa held that faith neither increased nor decreased. His proof is that faith is defined as true conviction [*taṣdīq*] and firm resolve [*jazm*] and this is joined with submission [*idhʿān*]. The noble Imam's point is that this does not increase or decrease by any addition of obedience or sin.

[289] Al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (p. 121-122)

Abū Ḥanīfa maintained that the decrease occurs in the general theme of faith (that is, its quality and effects) and not in its essence. This is because if the essence of faith decreases, then it indicates that one does not have firm faith; and faith that is deficient and doubtful is unacceptable.[290]

### 22.3 *The reply to Abū Ḥanīfa and the Māturīdīs*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the reply to them is that true conviction [*taṣdīq*] has levels, and that the *taṣdīq* of the follower [*muqallid*] cannot be like the *taṣdīq* of the one who knows through sound proofs [*'ārif*]. Similarly, the *taṣdīq* of the *'ārif* cannot be like the *taṣdīq* of the one who has reached an intense awareness that Allah observes him [*murāqib*]. Neither can the *taṣdīq* of the *murāqib* be like the *taṣdīq* of the one who worships as if he sees Allah [*mushāhid*]. Finally, the *taṣdīq* of the *mushāhid* cannot be like the *taṣdīq* of the one completely immersed in Allah [*mustaghriq*]. Each holds a level higher than the preceding one.

### 22.4 *The faith of the Prophets and angels*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the discussion on the increase and decrease of faith excludes the faith of the Prophets and angels. Their faith increases but never decreases according to one opinion. Another opinion states that their faith neither increases nor decreases.

He said that the noble author's statement, "*...and some said that it does not* [*wa-qīla lā*]," indicates that some held the view that faith increases, but does not decrease. This is the opinion of al-Khaṭṭābī, namely that faith of words [*qawl*] does not increase nor decrease; faith of actions [*'amal*] increases and decreases; and faith of beliefs [*i'tiqād*] increases, but does not decrease. If it decreased, faith would vanish.[291]

[290] Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Farfūr,
*The Beneficial Message and the Definitive Proof in the Study of the Theology* [*Risāla al-Nāfi'a wa-Ḥujja al-Qāṭi'a fī 'Ilm al-Tawḥīd*] (p. 61)
[291] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 22)





وَقِيلَ لاَ خُلْفَ كَذَا قَدْ نُقِلا

*Yet others said there is no disagreement,*
*as has been transmitted*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that some scholars hold the view that there is, in reality, no actual difference of opinion between the two parties. Amongst them are Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Imam al-Ḥaramayn. They maintained that the difference of opinion is not a real [*ḥaqīqī*] difference, but rather only a difference in wording [*lafẓī*]; thus, Imam al-Bājūrī interprets the saying about the increase and decrease of faith as relating to actions [*a'māl*], and he interprets the saying about the negation of the increase and decrease of faith as relating to conviction [*taṣdīq*]. According to these noble scholars, this is an example of two different ways of expressing essentially the same thing.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that, in summary, the increase and decrease of *īmān* is divided into three categories:

- It increases and decreases, and this is the *īmān* of the *umma* in general, including mankind and *jinn*.
- It neither increases nor decreases, and this is the *īmān* of the angels according to the well-known position [*mashhūr*].
- It increases but never decreases, and this is the *īmān* of the Prophets.
- Some added a fourth category, and said that it never increases, but only decreases—and this is the *īmān* of the transgressors [*fussāq*].[292]

[292] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 22)

# CHAPTER FOUR

## VERSE 23

فَوَاجِبٌ لَهُ الوُجُودُ وَالقِدَمْ  كَذَا بَقَاءٌ لَا يُشَابُ بِالْعَدَمْ

*Necessary for Him is existence and pre-eternality,*
*Likewise, eternality, which is not affected by non-existence*

فَوَاجِبٌ لَهُ الوُجُودُ وَالقِدَمْ

*Necessary for Him is existence and pre-eternality*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the word *wājib* is the predicate [*khabar*], which has been placed at the beginning while the word *wujūd* is the subject [*mubtada'*], which has been placed at the end.

One of the functions of changing the normal order of subject and predicate in the science of rhetoric [*balāgha*] is to place emphasis on or to show the importance [*ihtimām*] of the word placed at the beginning. The noble author's purpose was to place emphasis on the necessary existence of the Creator ﷻ.

### 23.1 *The subject matter of the Jawhara*

The subject matter of this craft is divided into three parts:

- *Ilāhiyyāt* are topics pertaining to the Divine Essence [*Dhāt*] of Allah and His attributes [*ṣifāt*].
- *Nubuwwāt* are topics pertaining to Prophethood, the Prophets, and related matters.
- *Sam'iyyāt* are topics pertaining to those beliefs that cannot be established by other than transmission from the Qur'an and Sunna. These include the signs of the Hour, life after death, the resurrection, Paradise and Hell, and so forth.





The noble author commenced with the necessary [*wājib*] because of its nobility [*sharaf*]. He then commenced to expound upon what is *wājib* with the attribute of existence [*wujūd*] because it is like the foundation [*aṣl*] and the rest of the attributes are like its branch [*far'*]. This is because the judgements [*aḥkām*] pertaining to necessity [*wujūb*] are related to everything that is necessary [*wājibāt*] for Allah ﷻ. Impossibility [*istiḥāla*] deals with everything that is impossible [*mustaḥīlāt*] for Allah ﷻ. Permissibility [*jawāz*] deals with everything that is permissible or possible [*yajūz*] for Allah ﷻ. These cannot be properly understood except after establishing that His existence is necessary.[293]

## الوُجُودُ

*Existence*

### 23.2 *The meaning of Necessary Existent* [*Wājib al-wujūd*]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the meaning of *Wājib al-wujūd* is that it is not possible [*lā yajūz*] for Allah to be non-existent ['*adam*]. This means that Allah does not accept non-existence.

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that necessary [*wājib*] for Allah ﷻ is the self-signifying attribute [*ṣifa nafsiyya*], which is existence [*wujūd*], and it is self-sufficient existence [*wujūd al-dhāti*]. The *ṣifa nafsiyya* falls under a category called the attributes of affirmation [*ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*].[294] The description of this attribute points towards His Divine Essence [*Dhāt*] and not towards anything other than His Essence.[295]

[293] *Sharh al-Bājūrī* (verse 23)

[294] There are two categories of attributes: the attributes of affirmation [*ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*] and the attributes of negation [*sifāt al-salbiyya*].

[295] According to the *Ash'arīs*, this attribute is the essence of existence [*'ayn al-mawjūd*] and not something added to the essence or something describing it.

### 23.3 *The rational proof for existence [wujūd]*

Allah ﷻ exists by Himself alone; His existence is not dependant on any of His creation. His existence is not attributed to a cause [*'illa*] like that of His creation. The *wujūd* of Allah is a self-sufficient and independent existence that is not caused by anything. His existence does not accept non-existence, and it does not undergo change. His existence is pre-eternal and is not caused by anything.

This means that Allah's existence ﷻ is different to that of His creation, as everything created has a need or requires something else to exist. Since the creation is in need of Allah ﷻ, the need itself is necessary for its existence. The existence of Allah is free from this. Thus, the existence of Allah is necessary [*wājib*] and not just permissible [*jā'iz*]. The existence of anything besides Allah ﷻ is merely a possibility. Furthermore, if the existence of Allah were merely a possibility, it would require one of two self-defeating logical fallacies: circular reasoning [*dawr*] or infinite regression [*tasalsul*].[296]

Another subtle point is that all bodies [*ajsām*] are divisible [*munqasim*], every divisible thing is compound [*murakkab*], every compound thing is originated [*muḥdath*], and every originated thing requires an originator [*muḥdith*]. Therefore, every originated thing is in need of the Necessary Existent.

### 23.4 *The categories of existent things*

There are three kinds of existence:

- Necessary existent [*Wājib al-wujūd*]. He ﷻ exists always. He has never been non-existent, nor will He cease to exist in the future, eternally. Only Allah is *Wājib al-wujūd*.
- That which impossible to exist and which will never exist [*mumtani' al-wujūd*]. An example of this is a partner to the Maker [*sharīk al-Bārī'*]. This is impossible because any likeness to Him can never exist.

[296] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murid Sharh Jawhara al-Tawhīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





- That which is possible to exist [*mumkin al-wujūd*]. This includes the worlds and the universe. The opposite of existence is non-existence ['*adam*]. All of creation was in a state of non-existence before they were brought into existence.

### 23.5 *Doctrines that are rejected by Ahl al-Sunna*

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that these include:

- The doctrine of certain Sufis and philosophers that Allah is the absolute existence [*wujūd al-muṭlaq*], and that anything other than Allah cannot be attributed with existence. This means that nothing exists except Allah. They maintain that *if* man truly exists, then his existence must be attached to the existence of Allah, and that he must belong to Allah's existence.
- Incarnation [*ḥulūl*], which is the belief that Allah is in you and that He is in everything.
- Union [*ittiḥād*], which is the belief in the union between the Creator and the creation, whereby the whole of creation is unified with Allah.

The doctrines of *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl* are outside the fold of Islam according to the consensus of the *mutakallimīn*. It is in fact error to attribute any of the above concepts to the great leaders of Islamic spirituality [*taṣawwuf*].

However, when a *walī*[297] of Allah expresses himself in this way then his words must be interpreted in context, and in a manner that is suitable to how he sometimes expresses himself in moments of ecstasy.

[297] A *walī* is a person whom Allah ﷻ has given enabling grace [*tawfīq*] in obeying Him and in not disobeying Him, both outwardly and inwardly. They possess distinct qualities mentioned in the Qur'an, namely, that they have no fear, nor do they grieve their lot. They are the foremost of mankind after the Messengers and Prophets.

### 23.6 *The creation proves the existence of the Creator*

As for any existence that is other than His Essence, such as our existence, then it is solely by His action. The proof for Allah's existence is the existence of this creation we find ourselves in, for if it were not for Allah ﷻ there would be nothing. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Do they not think profoundly about themselves, Allah has created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, except with truth and for an appointed term. Verily, many of mankind denies the meeting with their Lord.*﴾ [30:8]

It was narrated that ■ Bedouin was asked about proof for the existence of Allah ﷻ. He replied: "The droppings (in the sands) point to the existence of the camel or donkey, and the footsteps [point] to the traveller. Do then the heavens containing the stars, the earth with its mountain passes, and the oceans with their waves, not point towards a Wise, Powerful and All-Knowing Creator?"[298]

This attribute is therefore the foundation [*aṣl*] upon which the other attributes are built.

وَالْقِدَمْ

*And pre-eternality*

### 23.7 *The attributes of negation [ṣifāt al-salbiyya]*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that (the second attribute) necessary for the *mukallaf* to believe in is *qidam*, which is connected [*mu'tūf*] to the word *wujūd*. The next five *ṣifāt* are called the attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*], which negates anything unbefitting of Allah's majesty. The attributes of negation are unlimited according to the correct opinion [*ṣaḥīḥ*], while the noble author mentioned five because all other attributes which negate anything lowly from Allah ﷻ return to these. This means that the attributes of negation not mentioned bear the same proofs as the five foundational ones mentioned.[299]

[298] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥid* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)
[299] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 23)





Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that the word *salb* means 'to negate' and that this category of *ṣifāt* are referred to as 'negating,' since they remove from one's mind things which are not associated with Allah ﷻ. When we say that Allah manifests pre-eternality, then we negate the notion that Allah ﷻ has a beginning. When we say that Allah ﷻ manifests eternality, then we negate that Allah has an ending. When we say that He ﷻ is Dissimilar from the creation, then we negate that He is similar to creation. When we say that He is Self-Subsisting, then we negate that He is dependent; and when we refer to Allah's oneness, then we negate that He has partners.

Thus, the attributes of negation, which will be elaborated upon, include:

- Pre-eternality [*qidam*]
- Eternality [*baqā'*]
- Dissimilarity from the creation [*mukhālafa lil-ḥawādith*]
- Self-subsistence [*qiyām bil-nafs*]
- Oneness [*waḥdāniyya*]

The first negating attribute, ■ mentioned, is pre-eternality [*qidam*], which lexically means 'ancient' when it refers to creation, but when it refers to Allah ﷻ it means 'pre-eternality.' It is defined ■ something that is not preceded by non-existence (unlike contingent things). It is necessary [*wājib*] for Allah ﷻ to be attributed with *qidam*. This means that Allah ﷻ was not non-existent and then became existent, but that nothing else existed before Him ﷻ.

### 23.8 *The rational proof for pre-eternality [qidam]*

If this were not the case, then it would mean that Allah ﷻ would be in need of an originator [*muḥdith*], and this originator would in turn be in need of its own originator, and so forth. This would carry on forever and regress into infinity, as each originator relied upon another originator for its existence.

Such a situation would also imply that all these originators would be equal, because whatever applies to one member of a class applies equally to all other members of that same class. This

leads to circular reasoning [*dawr*], or infinite regression [*tasalsul*], which are impossible for Allah ﷻ. Furthermore, anything that is based on a false premise is also false in outcome.

The opposite of *qidam* is *ḥādith*, meaning to be contingent and have a beginning. All contingent things [*ḥawādith*] were once non-existent and thereafter were brought into existence. The origin of contingent things is therefore non-existence.

### 23.9 *The difference between pre-eternal [qadīm] and beginningless [azalī]*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that scholars differed regarding the terms *qadīm* and *azalī*. Some have said they mean the same thing, while others said they have different connotations. Those who claim that they differ, define each as follows:

- *Qadīm* is more restricted than *azalī* and refers to anything that exists and has no beginning, which is Allah ﷻ alone.
- *Azalī* refers to anything that has no beginning, whether it exists or not. Allah's existence is therefore described as *qadīm* and *azalī*. An example of other than Allah that is *azalī* is our non-existence. Before we existed, we were non-existent ['*adam*]. Our non-existence does not have a beginning and is therefore termed 'pre-eternal.' We can call our non-existence *azalī*, but not *qadīm*.

### 23.10 *The textual proof for qidam*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*He is the First [al-Awwal] and the Last [al-Ākhir]*﴾ [57:3] Al-Bayhaqī said: "The First is the One Whose existence has no beginning." Al-Ṭabarī said: "He ﷻ is the First, the One Who existed before everything, without a limit." Al-Khaṭṭābī said: "The First is the One Who preceded all things. He is rightfully the First, since He existed when there was nothing before, or with Him." The Prophet ﷺ said: "You are the First, so there are none before You, and You are the Last, so there are none after You."[300] And he ﷺ said: "Allah existed and nothing existed with Him..."[301]

[300] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2713)
[301] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 7418)





كَذَا بَقَاءٌ

*Likewise, eternality*

The second negating attribute that is necessary for Allah ﷻ to be described with is eternality [*baqā'*].

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the nunation [*tanwīn*] at the end of the word *baqā'un* indicates both categorisation [*tanwī*] and greatness [*ta'ẓīm*]. It is therefore one of many types [*anwā'*] of *baqā'* indicating greatness like the previously mentioned attributes of *wujūd* and *qidam*.

*Baqā'* with respect to Allah ﷻ means that there is no ending to His existence ['*adam al-ākhiriyya lil-wujūd*]. This means that Allah ﷻ is described as being Eternal, without ending. This attribute negates that Allah ﷻ will have an ending, or that His existence will ever cease.

### 23.11 *The rational and textual proof for eternality [baqā']*

The rational proof that Allah ﷻ is Pre-eternal is also proof that it is impossible for Allah ﷻ to have an ending. Imam al-Bājūrī said that, were it possible for Allah to experience non-existence, then it would be impossible for Him to be Pre-eternal.

This was mentioned in verse 17: "*And anything for which non-existence ['adam] is permissible [jāza], pre-eternality [qidam] is definitively [qaṭ'an] impossible [yastaḥīl] for it.*"

*Baqā'* also negates that Allah ﷻ is a temporal being. He created time, and therefore, cannot be contained by it.

Created things have two timelines: their past and their present. The very second that we exhale becomes the past as soon as we inhale. Allah ﷻ is not subject to this.

His pre-eternal nature is not contained within time. It will not end. However, all of creation—as our Creator so reminds us in the Qur'an—will end. It is rationally impossible for Allah ﷻ to have an ending, since this would imply that an absolute creator would require another absolute creator to bring about this ending.

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*All that is on earth shall perish, and the Countenance of your Lord will remain, with majesty and honour.*﴾ [55:26-27]

لَا يُشَابُ بِالْعَدَمْ

*Which is not affected by non-existence*

This means: 'which is not affected by the possibility [*jawāz*] of non-existence,' meaning that His existence is never followed by non-existence nor is it joined with anything that accepts non-existence. This was expressed in the saying of Labīd:[302]

أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللهُ بَاطِلُ وَكُلُّ نَعِيمٍ لَا مَحَالَةَ زَائِلُ

*Is not everything other than Allah in vain,*
*And every delight inevitably transient*

### 23.12 *The divisions of existence and non-existence*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is known from what preceded that Allah ﷻ the First [*al-Awwal*] (without beginning) and the Last [*al-Ākhir*] (without ending); that our non-existence ['*adam*] does not have a beginning while it has an ending; that the creation [*makhlūqāt*] has a beginning and an ending; and that the bliss of Paradise [*na'īm al-janna*] and the punishment of the Fire ['*adhāb al-nār*] have a beginning but not an ending. The latter is established through the *sharī'a* and not the intellect, because their non-existence is rationally possible.[303]

## VERSE 24

وَأَنَّهُ لِمَا يَنَالُ الْعَدَمُ مُخَالِفٌ بُرْهَانُ هٰذَا الْقِدَمُ

*And whatsoever is affected by non-existence,*
*He is Dissimilar from it, the proof for this is (His) pre-eternality*

[302] He is Abū 'Uqayl Labīd b. Rabī'a b. Mālik b. Ja'far b. Kilāb al-Āmirī and was from amongst the great poets of the *jāhiliyya*. He accepted Islam, performed the *hijra*, and lived in Medina.
[303] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 23)





وَأَنَّهُ لِمَا يَنَالُ الْعَدَمُ مُخَالِفٌ

*And whatsoever is affected by non-existence,*
*He is Dissimilar from it*

The third negating attribute, which is necessary for Allah ﷻ to be described with, is that He ﷻ is Dissimilar from the creation [*Mukhālif lil-ḥawādith*]. The creation is contingent, which is defined as that which became existent after being non-existent. All contingent things are subject to change, and will eventually perish, since they are not eternal in themselves. Allah ﷻ is not affected by the things and events pertaining to this world [*dunyā*] or the Hereafter [*ākhira*].

### 24.1 *The rational proof for dissimilarity from the creation [mukhālafa lil-ḥawādith]*

Because He ﷻ is different and not of the same nature as His creation, it follows that Allah ﷻ is not have a body, neither is He a substance [*jawhar*], nor is He an accident ['*arad*].[304] A body consists of substances [*jawāhir*]. An accident is a property or quality of a substance. It is necessary [*wājib*] that Allah ﷻ be different to His creation because contingent things exist either as substances or as accidents, in time and space. None of these properties or attributes are possible for the Necessary Existent [*Wājib al-wujūd*] since they are subject to change. Anything that is subject to change is contingent, and this is impossible for the One Who is described as Pre-eternal.

مُخَالِفٌ بُرْهَانُ هٰذَا الْقِدَمُ

*The proof for this is (His) pre-eternality*

The proof that it is necessary for Allah to be attributed with pre-eternality [*qidam*] is also the proof that no change can ever occur in Him ﷻ. Therefore, He will not have an ending because

[304] All that manifests in a body is necessarily an accident.

His end can only come about if He has undergone ■ change. Contingent things are not *qadīm*, and non-existence is not impossible for them. For Allah ﷻ non-existence is impossible, because no change can occur in Him.[305]

### 24.2 *The textual proof for mukhālafa lil-ḥawādith*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*There is nothing like unto him...*﴾ [42:11] and: ﴿*He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none comparable to Him*﴾ [112:3-4]

Therefore, He ﷻ does not resemble the creation in His Essence [*Dhāt*], ■ His attributes [*ṣifāt*], or in His actions [*afʿāl*].

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that when we say that Allah ﷻ is Dissimilar from the creation, this means that He is different from every single contingent thing [*ḥādith*]. This differing lies in the negation of corporeality [*jirmiyya*], accidents [*ʿaraḍiyya*], necessities [*lawāzim*], and parts [*juzʾiyya*]. For contingent things must have ■ substance [*jawhar*] and accidents, be located in time [*zamān*] and place [*makān*], and have a direction [*jiha*] and limits [*ḥudūd*], and none of these are applicable to the One Who is *Wājib al-wujūd*.[306]

## VERSE 25

قِيَامُهُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَحْدَانِيَّهْ  مُنَزَّهاً أَوْصَافُهُ سَنِيَّهْ

*Self-subsistence, and oneness,*
*Transcendent are His noble attributes*

[305] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)
[306] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 24)





قِيَامُهُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَحْدَانِيَّهْ

## *Self-subsistence*

The fourth negating attribute that is necessary for Allah to be described with is self-subsistence [*qiyām bil-nafs*]. This means that He ﷻ exists by Himself alone and is not dependent upon anything else. Allah ﷻ is not in need of space, a creator, or a sustainer.

The word *nafs* is derived from *nafasa* (preciousness) and has many shades of meaning. It can be used to refer to the Essence of Allah ﷻ, ■ alluded to in the Qur'an where Allah says: ﴿*Your Lord has prescribed mercy for Himself* [*nafsihi*]*...*﴾ [6:54]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the noble author used the word *nafs*, intending by it the Essence of Allah ﷻ, and mentioned that *qiyām bil-nafs* means that Allah ﷻ is not dependent on ■ *maḥall*, meaning an essence [*dhāt*], to exist in. The word *maḥall* can refer to a place [or locus] but here it refers to an essence.

*Qiyām bil-nafs* therefore indicates two things:

- That Allah is not in need [*ʿadam al-iftiqār*] of another essence.
- And that He ﷻ is not in need of a *mukhaṣṣiṣ*, i.e., someone to bring Him into existence.

### 25.1 *The rational proof for self-subsistence* [*qiyām bil-nafs*]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that if Allah ﷻ would be in need of an essence to exist in, then He would be an attribute [*ṣifa*], since an attribute is what exists within an essence. If Allah were a *ṣifa* then He could not possibly be described with the attributes of affirmation [*ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*].[307] It is therefore necessary [*wājib*] that He ﷻ is not in need of an essence to exist in. Additionally, since Allah ﷻ is without beginning and without ending, it follows that it is also necessary that He does not have a creator.

[307] The attributes of affirmation will be discussed after the attributes of negation. We have already discussed the first attribute of affirmation (in verse 23, p. 202-206): existence [*wujūd*].

### 25.2 *The textual proof for qiyām bil-nafs*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, Allah is free from need of the worlds.*﴾ [3:97; 29:6] And He says: ﴿*O mankind! Ye are the poor in your relation to Allah. And Allah! He is the Absolute, the Owner of praise.*﴾ [35:15] And He says: ﴿*Allah is al-Ṣamad.*﴾ [112:2]

The word *al-Ṣamad* in this Sūra has three main interpretations according to the commentators. The most widely accepted refers to the One to whom every living thing turns for help and sustenance. Everything depends on *al-Ṣamad*, Who in turn is completely independent and Self-Subsisting, standing in need nothing else besides Himself.

## وَحْدَانِيَّةٌ

## *And oneness*

The fifth negating attribute that is necessary for Allah to be described with is oneness [*waḥdāniyya*], which is the oneness of Allah ﷻ with regard to His Essence [*Dhāt*], attributes [*ṣifāt*], and actions [*af'āl*]. The *waḥdāniyya* of Allah ﷻ is defined as being One, unique, not composed of parts, and that He ﷻ is not more than One entity. This means Allah is without any partner [*sharīk*] in His Essence, attributes, and actions.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the discussion on *waḥdāniyya* is the most noble of studies in this craft, and for this reason, the name of this science was derived from it (i.e., *'ilm al-tawḥīd*). Its nobility is also clear from the many verses in the Qur'an speaking about the oneness of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*And your Lord is One. There is no god but He.*﴾ [2:163]





### 25.3 *The rational and textual proof for oneness [Waḥdāniyya]*

The rational proof is that if more than one God would exist then discord would be possible between them, resulting in conflict and chaos. One might will the creation of something while the other might will the opposite. This is so, since gods are not to be restrained.[308]

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Had there been within the heavens and the earth gods other than Allah, it would have been corrupted.*﴾ [21:22]

### 25.4 *Negating the five pluralities [al-kumūm al-khamsa]*

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks explains:

*The oneness of the Divine Essence [Dhāt]*

*Waḥdāniyya* means that the Essence of Allah is not a compound, formed from separate elements, like the body of a human being. Allah ﷻ is not subject to division into smaller parts, which is referred to in *tawḥīd* as *al-kamm al-muttaṣil*. *Waḥdāniyya* thus implies the negation of *al-kamm al-muttaṣil*.

*Waḥdāniyya* also means that Allah ﷻ is not a member of a class of Divine beings. None besides Him has an essence like His Essence. He is completely unique in this regard. *Waḥdāniyya*, therefore, also implies that Allah ﷻ is not *al-kamm al-munfaṣil*, or simply stated, Allah ﷻ is not a member of a class of entities, since He is beyond classification. In summary, *waḥdāniyya* of the Essence implies that we negate both *al-kamm al-muttaṣil* and *al-kamm al-munfaṣil* from the Essence of Allah ﷻ.

*The oneness of the Divine attributes [ṣifāt]*

The concepts of *al-kamm al-muttaṣil* and *al-kamm al-munfaṣil* do equally not apply to the Divine attributes, namely as follows: the power [*qudra*] of Allah is one indivisible attribute. We cannot reasonably argue that He possesses two separate powers, or two separate attributes of knowledge ['*ilm*], and so forth for the remaining *ṣifāt*.

[308] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 25)

Scholars mention this point since some hold the opinion of divisibility. This notion of divisibility of the attributes is an assertion of *al-kamm al-muttaṣil* in relation to the Divine attributes.

*Waḥdāniyya*, therefore, implies the negation of *al-kamm al-muttaṣil* in relation to the attributes. *Waḥdāniyya* also means that none other than Allah ﷻ has Divine attributes. For example, none of creation has the absolute knowledge of Allah. This is the negation of *al-kamm al-munfaṣil* with respect to the Divine attributes.

In conclusion, both the *Dhāt* and *ṣifāt* of Allah are beyond *kammiyya* (quantity) and cannot be quantified in any way. The sole objective of the scholars in discussing this issue ■ this kind of detail is to refute the notion that Allah is divisible or quantifiable.

*The oneness of the Divine actions [af'āl]*

Allah ﷻ is the Creator of everything. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, We have created all things in due proportion.*﴾ [54:49]

The phrase 'everything,' at surface level, includes every existent thing in the whole of creation, be it active or passive. This ■ the more widely held interpretation of this verse, and the *waḥdāniyya* of His actions means that Allah ﷻ is in reality the sole Actor in the universe, albeit that appearances might be to the contrary. Causes appear to act on their own—independently of any outside influences—but the reality is that Allah creates both the causes and their effects. Similarly, the actions of people are created by Allah as well as their capacity to execute these actions. Hence, actions are more accurately acquired by human beings, and not created—or generated—independently.[309]

[309] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks



## VERSE 26

عَنْ ضِدٍّ أَوْ شِبْهٍ شَرِيكٍ مُطْلَقاً  وَوَالِدٍ كَذَا الوَلَدْ وَالأَصْدِقَا

*Above an opposite, a resemblance, or ■ partner, absolutely,*
*Or a father, likewise, ■ son, and friends*

*The ṣifāt al-salbiyya* negate that Allah ﷻ can ever be attributed with these five attributes. The noble author mentioned that Allah ﷻ does not resemble His creation, and that He is without a partner, a father, a son, or companions.

### عَنْ ضِدٍّ

*Beyond an opposite*

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that Allah ﷻ is free from ■ opposite in His Essence, His attributes, and His actions; for if such oppositeness would be possible, it would lead to the non-existence of Allah ﷻ. The supposition that Allah ﷻ is *Wājib al-wujūd* necessitates that He exists, and that He remains in existence eternally. Rationally and textually, opposition leading to the non-existence of Allah ﷻ is impossible. This is because Allah is without beginning or end in His Essence and attributes.[310]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that we clearly understand something by its opposite [*didd*].[311] Another important point to keep in mind is that two opposites can never exist in one place at the same time.[312]

[310] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)

[311] Someone who is tall can easily be identified when standing next to someone who is short, likewise, something white can easily be identified when placed next to something black.

[312] This means that someone cannot be tall and short at the same time, nor can something be black and white at the same time.

## أَوْ شِبْهِ شَرِيكٍ مُطْلَقًا

### *A resemblance, or a partner, absolutely*

Allah is unique in His Essence and attributes and does not have an equal. He ﷻ is different to all possible and created things. As such, Allah ﷻ is free from any partner in His Essence, His attributes and His actions.

#### 26.1 *Types of resemblance*

There are three terms used by the scholars of *kalam* when declaring Allah transcendent [*tanzih*] above any resemblance. These types of resemblance include *shibh*, *nazir*, and *mathil*.

- As for *shibh*, this means that Allah does not have any resemblance that resembles Him greatly.
- As for *nazir*, this means that Allah does not have any resemblance that resembles Him even slightly.
- As for *mathil*, this means that Allah does not have any resemblance that is exactly like Him ﷻ.

The word *sharik* refers to a partner, which Allah absolutely does not have.[111]

## وَوَالِدٍ

### *Or a father*

Allah ﷻ does not have a father. Nor is it possible that He could have become detached from something that was living, such as a mother or father. In the same way, it is impossible that He ﷻ could have a child. It is also false that anything that is living could have been detached from Him. Allah ﷻ is free from companions, partners, and friends.

[111] *Sharh al-Nasafi* (verse 26)





The [textual] proof that He ﷻ is free from these needs, and Dissimilar from the creation, is found in the following verses: ﴿*There is nothing like unto Him...*﴾ [42:11] and: ﴿*Say: He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Everlasting; He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him.*﴾ [112:1-4] and: ﴿*And they say: "The most Merciful has begotten a son." Verily, you have brought forth a preposterous thing. Whereby the heavens would be almost torn, the earth split asunder and the mountains brought down. That they (dare) ascribe a son to the most Merciful!*﴾ [19:88] *Verily, it is not fitting that the most Merciful should beget a son.*﴾ [19:92][114]

## كَذَا الْوَلَدْ

### *Likewise, a son*

This means Allah is free from having a son. Prophet ʿIsā ﷺ is therefore not His son, rather, he was created without a father [*ab*], like Adam ﷺ was created without a father. The creation of Adam ﷺ is more wondrous as he was created from dust [*turāb*], without a father and without a mother [*umm*].

## وَالْأَصْدِقَا

### *And friends*

The most Merciful is free from needing of a friend or companion. The noble author used the plural [*aṣdiqā'*] and not the singular [*ṣadīq*] in order to include all types of friends.

#### 26.2 *The definition of 'friend' [ṣadīq]*

*Ṣadīq* is defined as one who is truthful [*ṣādiq*] in his love [*widd*] for you so that he is with you in truth [*fī al-haqq*]. He will put himself in harm's way to benefit you [*li-yanfa'ak*], and when the

[114] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Ithāf al-Murīd Sharh Jawhara al-Tawhīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)

difficulties of time approach you, he sacrifices himself [*yaḍurru nafsahu*] so that your affairs remain intact. Allah ﷻ is in not in need of a friend of this sort or any other sort, in reality.

It is likewise impossible for Allah ﷻ to have enemies [*aʿdā*] since no one can cause any harm to Allah in reality. Verses indicating that Allah ﷻ has enemies are interpreted to mean those who disobey Allah and cause corruption on the earth.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*The Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire...*﴾ [41:19]"[315]

### 26.3 *What Allah is not*

- He is not ▬ accident [*ʿaraḍ*], because an accident does not subsist by itself but needs an essence [*maḥall*] to subsist in; and because the eternality [*baqāʾ*] of an accident is impossible [*yumtanīʿ*].
- He ﷻ is not ▪ body [*jism*]. A body is something compound and has boundaries, which is a mark of being contingent.
- He ﷻ is not a substance [*jawhar*]. This is true from our standpoint, for we say that *jawhar* is the name for a part [*juzʾ*] that cannot be further divided, that has boundaries and is a part of a body. Allah ﷻ is far Exalted above such a definition.
- He ﷻ is not something formed [*muṣawwar*]. 'Formed' means having a form [*ṣūra*] or a shape [*shakl*], like the form of ▪ man or a horse. Form is one of the characteristics particular to bodies. It occurs in them by means of quantities [*kammiyyāt*] and qualities [*kayfiyyāt*] and by setting limits and ends.
- He ﷻ is not limited [*maḥdūd*]. To be limited means to have a limit or an ending.
- He ﷻ is not counted [*maʿdūd*]. To be counted means to have a number and multiplicity; that is, Allah ﷻ is not the locus of quantities, whether continuous [*muttaṣila*] like magnitudes [*maqādir*], or discrete [*munfaṣila*] like things counted.

[315] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 26)





- He ﷻ is not portioned [*mutabaʿiḍ*] or divided [*mutajuzʾi*]. This means that He does not consist of portions and parts.
- He ﷻ is not compound [*mutarakkab*]. This is impossible for Allah ﷻ, since all compound things are contingent and have a need for something else, which is inconsistent with the Necessary Existent [*Wājib al-wujūd*]. That which has parts is called 'compound' when the parts are in composition together, and 'portioned' and 'divided' when they are separated.
- He ﷻ does not come to an end [*mutanāh*]. Having an end is one of the characteristics of magnitudes and numbers.
- He ﷻ is not described by quiddity [*māʾiyya*]. This means that Allah is not of the same genus as other things; for when we ask 'what is its quiddity?' we mean: 'of what genus is it?' Sharing the same characteristics requires that the same genus can differ from within by means of certain divisions, and that necessitates the existence of composition.
- He ﷻ is not described by quality [*kayfiyya*]. That is, He is not attributed with colour, taste, odour, heat, cold, dampness, dryness, or any other thing subsisting in bodies [*ajsām*], or things that are in a particular state [*mizāj*] or compound [*tarkīb*].
- He ﷻ is not in a place [*makān*]. Being in ▪ place [*tamakkun*] means one dimension [*buʿd*] entering into another, whether real or imagined. 'Dimension' means an extension [*imtidād*] subsisting in ▪ body, or the existence of a vacuum [*khalāʾ*]. Allah is far removed from extensions and magnitudes, because this requires Him to be divided into parts.
- Time [*zamān*] does not affect Him ﷻ. To us, time is an expression for something renewed, by which something else renewed is measured.[316]

[316] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyya* (p. 36-39); cf. *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (p. 42-45)

# CHAPTER FIVE

## VERSE 27

وَقُدْرَةٌ إِرَادَةٌ وَغَايَرَتْ  أَمْراً وَعِلْماً وَالرِّضَا كَمَا ثَبَتْ

*And power, (and) will, are distinguished from,*
*His command, knowledge, and contentment,*
*as has been affirmed*

The noble author proceeds with the attributes of affirmation [*ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*], which are fourteen in number. They are referred to as the attributes of affirmation because they convey additional and independent meanings about the Divine Essence. These are divided into two categories: the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] and the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*]. As for the *ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*, they are seven in number according to the *Ash'arīs*, while some say that they are eight.

### 27.1 *The attributes of meaning [ṣifāt al-ma'ānī]*

These are referred to as the attributes of meaning because they affirm meanings subsisting in Allah's Essence, befitting His perfection. These are also referred to as the essential attributes [*ṣifāt dhātiyya*] of Allah ﷻ and are seven in number according to the *Ash'arīs*, while others add an eighth attribute, perception [*idrāk*], regarding which there is difference of opinion. The seven attributes of meaning are: power [*qudra*], will [*irāda*], knowledge ['*ilm*], life [*ḥayāt*], hearing [*sam'*], sight [*baṣar*], and speech [*kalām*].

Sayyid Aḥmad al-Marzūqi al-Mālikī composed the following in his *'Aqīda al-'Awām*:

فقدرة إرادة سمع بصر  حياة العلم كلام استمر

*Power, will, hearing, sight*
*Knowledge, life, and continuous speech*





### 27.2 *The attributes pertaining to meaning [ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya]*

The attributes pertaining to meaning are related to the seven attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*], of which they are a branch. They are regarded as 'pertaining to meaning' because they duly follow the meanings. Allah ﷻ is, therefore, All-Powerful [*al-Qādir*], Willing [*al-Murīd*], All-Knowing [*al-'Alīm*], Living [*al-Ḥayy*], All-Hearing [*al-Samī'*], All-Seeing [*al-Baṣīr*], and Speaking [*al-Mutakallim*].

وَقُدْرَةٌ

*And power*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *qudra* lexically means power or strength [*quwwa*] and ability [*istiṭā'a*], ■ explained by the noble author in his *Sharḥ al-Kabīr*. Technically, it refers to the pre-eternal attribute of the Essence of Allah [*qā'imatun bi-Dhātihi*] through which everything that is possible [*mumkin*] is brought into existence [*ījād*] and is removed from of existence [*i'dām*], commensurate with His will [*irāda*] ﷻ.[317]

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that it must be noted that definitions of the *ṣifāt* do not, and are not, intended to delineate the reality of a particular attribute. The reason is that the attributes of the infinite cannot be fully comprehended and adequately brought into the scope of human thought. This applies equally to all the *ṣifāt*. The role of this definition is, consequently, only limited to describing the functions of the *ṣifāt*.[318]

[317] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 27)
[318] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*

### 27.3 Functions of the attribute of power [qudra]

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that, according to the *Ash'arīs*, the *qudra* of Allah ﷻ is responsible for the creation of the world as well as its eventual perishing. This is the opinion of the later scholars. Imam al-Ash'arī believed that the *qudra* functions solely by creating, and not by destroying. This view can be explained by the world emerging from a state of non-existence through the creative act of Allah ﷻ, and is kept in existence through His *qudra*. Non-existence, however, still constitutes its essential nature. Thus, if Allah ﷻ wills for the world, or part of it, to perish, ﷻ simply withdraws His support [*madad*] and the world recedes back into non-existence without Him actively ending its existence.

### 27.4 Potential power [qudra ṣulūḥī] and effective power [qudra tanjīzī]

*Qudra* has two aspects: potential power [*qudra ṣulūḥī*], and effective power [*qudra tanjīzī*] in relation to existent, created things. *Qudra ṣulūḥī* refers to the pre-eternal power of Allah to create before the actual existence of anything. Allah is, and there was nothing with Him. He never ceases to be eternally Powerful.

*Qudra tanjīzī* refers to the actual creation of the world, and the support that Allah gives to its continuous existence. Ibn 'Aṭā'illah[319] has said: "We have two great blessings [*ni'matān*] from Allah: the blessing of existence [*ni'ma al-ījād*], and the blessing of being supported by Him ﷻ continuously from day to day [*ni'ma al-imdād*]."

[319] The pearl of the Gnostics, Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl b. Muḥammad b. Abd al-Karīm b. 'Aṭā'illah al-Iskandarī was born in Alexandria in the middle of the seventh century after *hijra*. His family were renowned *Mālikī* jurists, while he was unique in mastering all the major sciences including *fiqh*, *tawḥīd*, and *taṣawwuf*. He taught at both al-Azhar mosque and the Manṣūriyya school in Cairo. He died at around sixty years of age and lies buried at the foot of *Jabal Muqaṭṭam* in the city of the dead in Cairo. He left behind the revered book *al-Ḥikam*, a masterpiece of deep insights and wisdom.





If Allah decrees to end these blessings—which we depend on completely—we would cease to exist. Ibn 'Aṭā'illah describes here the sustenance [*qayyūmiyya*] of Allah, a noun that is derived from the Divine name *al-Qayyūm* (the Sustaining). These blessings, and their continuity for every moment of the existence of the creation, constitute the definition of both the *qayyūmiyya* and the *qudra* of Allah ﷻ. These two concepts are closely related to each other with the main difference being that the first is considered a Divine name [*al-Qayyūm*], and the second a Divine attribute.

### 27.5 The rational and textual proof for power [qudra]

*Qudra* is a necessary [*wājib*] attribute of the Divine Essence [*Dhāt*]. Allah ﷻ cannot be incapable or powerless—for if this would be true, the universe itself could not exist. All people of reason will say that a cause without power connected to it cannot produce effects. We know, however, that the world exists—so its effective cause must necessarily be powerful. Allah says: *"Verily, He is over all things Powerful [Qadīr]."* [2:20; 2:106; 2:109][320]

## إِرَادَةٌ

## *Will*

It is necessary [*wājib*] that Allah has the attribute [*ṣifa*] of will [*irāda*]. Imam al-Bājūrī said that *irāda* lexically means *qasd* (intent). It is technically defined as a pre-eternal attribute subsisting in His Essence [*qā'ima bi-Dhātihi*] that specifies which of the possibilities [*mumkināt*] are brought into existence.

The *mumkināt* are the six possible things mentioned in ﷻ following poem:

المكنات المقابلات ... وجودنا والعدم الصفاتُ

أزمنة أمكنة جهات ... كذا المقادير روى الثقاتُ

[320] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks

*The possibilities include,*
*Our existence, non-existence, and attributes,*
*Times, places, directions,*
*Likewise, measurements,*
*as narrated by those trustworthy*[121]

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that the function of this will is to choose, or prefer, one possible thing to another. Allah ﷻ is the One Who wills all things into existence, and what He does not will is not brought into existence. Subsequently, whatever happens—good or evil—happens with the will [*irāda*] of Allah. In other words, no action can be executed without the power and will of Allah ﷻ.[122]

*Irāda* specifies the nature of every object that exists 'potentially' in the pre-eternal knowledge of Allah. This object only exists in actuality after the *qudra* brings it forth into the world. At the same time, something created by Allah can be perceptible or non-perceptible, existent or non-existent, black or white, male or female, and so forth. The Divine will specifies one of these possibilities according to the pre-eternal knowledge that Allah has of the object in question.

Consider the example of a green apple on a tree in your garden. It existed as a 'concept' in the knowledge of Allah ﷻ with the potential [to be brought into existence]. In accordance with His knowledge, Allah pre-eternally willed it into existence, and He willed it to be green, and finally, to grow in your garden. When the time—also known by Allah—for its actual existence manifests, the Divine power is executed in accordance with His will.

To put this process more schematically: Allah knew the status of the apple. He then willed its nature in conformity with His knowledge, and finally, His will is made manifest through His power. This, briefly stated, is the relationship between knowledge [*'ilm*], will [*irāda*] and power [*qudra*].

[121] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 27)
[122] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





## 27.6 *Potential will [irāda ṣulūḥī] and effective will [irāda tanjīzī]*

Will is a pre-eternal attribute of Allah, meaning that He has the 'potential' to will before the actual existence of the world. In *'ilm al-kalām*, this is called potential will [*irāda ṣulūḥī*]. On the other hand, *irāda tanjīzī* refers to the actual specifying of the nature of what is willed.

*Irāda ṣulūḥī*, thus, is the general potential to will—like the possibility of creating the earth—and *irāda tanjīzī* is the actual specifying of the nature of what is willed—like the earth being created in a spherical shape.

The question that arises here is whether *irāda ṣulūḥī* and *irāda tanjīzī* are pre-eternal [*qadīm*] as opposed to contingent [*ḥādith*]. The *Ash'arīs* are in agreement that both these aspects of the Divine will—the potential to will and the actual willing of something—are pre-eternal.

In the case of *irāda*, we have an important difference. The potential will [*irāda ṣulūḥī*] of Allah to create the world is pre-eternal and without beginning. The same is not the case, however, for *irāda tanjīzī*. The actual creation of the world occurred, as we know, in time. There was a beginning to the creation. If we said that *irāda tanjīzī* is also pre-eternal and not contingent, the world would be pre-eternal.

The pre-eternality of the universe is a belief espoused by certain philosophers, but completely rejected by *Ahl al-Sunna*. The distinction between *ṣulūḥī* and *tanjīzī* is made, amongst other reasons, precisely to refute this doctrine of the pre-eternality of the worlds and the universe.

## 27.7 *The rational and textual proof for will [irāda]*

The rational proof is that Allah ﷻ, by necessity, is attributed with will, because He decided to create the world out of His own free will. The world exists and could have equally not existed. Its existence is a result of free choice. Therefore, the Creator of the world must have the will either to create or not to create. Allah ﷻ must have the capacity to specify certain qualities in certain things rather than in others, and this is precisely the meaning of *irāda*.

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it: 'Be!' And it is!*﴾ [36:82][323]

وَغَايَرَتْ أَمْراً وَعِلْماً وَالرِّضَا كَمَا ثَبَتْ

*Are distinguished from his command,*
*knowledge, and contentment, as has been affirmed*

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that the will of Allah must not be confused with His command [*amr*], His knowledge [*'ilm*], and His contentment [*riḍā*]. *Ahl al-Sunna* maintain that good and evil, and faith and disbelief, are all of the possible things [*mumkināt*], and that Allah's will [*irāda*] is connected to all possible things. In other words, nothing can happen without the will of Allah, and He directs His power [*qudra*] according to His will.

However, Allah granted us ■ acquired choice, which is called acquisition [*kasb*]. We are free to choose our actions and Allah ﷻ commands us not to do wrong, and not to disbelieve. Whatever the individual chooses will then be executed, and Allah then directs His power and will accordingly.

Whatever is going to happen is already known by Allah, for He is All-Knowing. Nonetheless, the fact that He knows whatever the choice of the individual is going to be does not imply force or compulsion.

Man is created, and so are all his actions (a discussion of which will follow in verse 48, p. 300-302). It follows that just as the creation of man requires the will of Allah, his actions also require the will of Allah. ■ Allah is the Creator of all possible things.[324]

[323] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks
[324] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





### 27.8 *Cosmic will [irāda kawniyya] and legal will [irāda shar'iyya]*

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that the scholars also classify the Divine will into cosmic will and the will of the *sharī'a*. The first term, *irāda kawniyya* refers to the general cosmic will that affects everything. The diversity of the fauna and flora, human biology, and culture, are all the result of this type of Divine will.

The second term, *irāda shar'iyya*, specifically refers to the Divine commands and prohibitions contained in the Holy Scriptures revealed to the Prophets throughout history. The *riḍā* of Allah embraces this second type of Divine will, and not necessarily the first type.

For example, the disbelief of Abū Jahl falls into the category of *irāda kawniyya* because nothing can or will happen without the Divine will. However, Allah ﷻ has condemned disbelief and sin in all His revealed Books. This condemnation represents His *irāda shar'iyya*. Free-will and accountability are addressed by this will.

## Verse 28

وَعِلْمُهُ وَلَا يُقَالُ مُكْتَسَبْ فَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْحَقِّ وَاطْرَحِ الرِّيَبْ

*And His knowledge is not said to be acquired,*
*So follow the path of truth, and shun all doubts*

وَعِلْمُهُ وَلَا يُقَالُ مُكْتَسَبْ

*And his knowledge is not said to be acquired*

### 28.1 *The attribute of knowledge ['ilm]*

The third attribute of meaning [*ṣifa al-ma'ānī*] is knowledge [*'ilm*], and it is necessary that Allah be attributed with it.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the knowledge of Allah is defined as a pre-eternal attribute [*ṣifa azaliyya*] connected to all things that are necessary [*wājibāt*], permissible [*jā'izāt*], and impossible [*mustaḥīlāt*], and that it is all-encompassing and not preceded by anything hidden from Him.

He has pre-eternal knowledge of all things in both a general [*ijmālan*] and a detailed [*tafṣīlan*] sense, including their universals [*kulliyāt*] and minute particulars [*juz'iyyāt*].

Likewise, He ﷻ knows the details of that which has no ending, such as His own perfections [*kamālāt*] and the breaths of the inhabitants of Paradise [*anfās ahl al-janna*].[325]

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that Allah's knowledge is absolutely distinct and clear, without limitation or deficiency—which by virtue of its nature does not produce any effect on the world as in the case of power and will. Knowledge however, remains an indispensable, latent condition for the effectiveness of both will and power.[326]

### 28.2 *The rational and textual proof for 'ilm*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the rational proof [*dalīl 'aqlī*] that Allah must have knowledge is that Allah is the Creator and His actions are flawless [*mutqin*] and perfect [*muḥkam*], and are brought into existence through intent [*qaṣd*] and choice [*ikhtiyār*]. All of this necessitates that He must have knowledge.[327]

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that if Allah were not All-Knowing, He would have been ignorant. If He were ignorant, nothing would have been created. This is because knowledge is essential in order to create. Thus, knowledge is a necessary attribute [*ṣifa wājiba*] and ignorance [*jahl*] is a limitation and impossible [*mustaḥīl*] for Him ﷻ. His knowledge is pre-eternal [*qadīm*], and does not resemble our knowledge, which is originated and flawed.

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Allah has the perfect knowledge of everything.*﴾ [8:75] And He says: ﴿*And with Him are the keys of the all that is hidden, none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is on the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it...*﴾ [6:59] and: ﴿*And Allah is the All-Knowing of everything.*﴾ [2:282]

[325] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 28)
[326] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks
[327] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 28)





### 28.3 *Human knowledge is created*

The knowledge we have is created knowledge, which is referred to as *muktasab*. This kind of knowledge is obtained through contemplation and reasoning. It is the product of labour and effort and is nothing else but created knowledge.

An example is seen in an artist planning a painting. Before he actually picks up the brush, he will have knowledge of the work he wishes to create. After the idea has taken shape in his mind, he wills himself to paint and then executes his composition on the canvas.

Knowledge comes first, followed by the desire, or intention, to paint, and finally, the actual painting itself. It is important not to confuse the knowledge of Allah with human knowledge. In this respect, scholars make a distinction between innate knowledge [*'ilm dhātī*] and acquired knowledge [*'ilm kasbī*]. All of human knowledge is acquired through reading, thinking, experience, learning, or Divine inspiration. Allah's knowledge, on the other hand, is innate and complete.[328]

### 28.4 *Allah's knowledge is pre-eternal*

Allah's knowledge is *qadīm*; therefore, any verse of the Qur'an or Hadith that alludes to it being acquired [*muktasab*] must be contextualised and properly interpreted.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Then We sent them, that We may know* [*li-na'lama*] *which of the two parties...*﴾ [18:12]

The *lām* in *li-na'lama* is for explanation or reasoning [*lām al-ta'līl*]. Taken literally, this verse seems to indicate that Allah is in need of an explanation. This is not the case, for the *lām* is rather understood as a particle of informing and benefit. Allah is not in need of any explanation! For this reason, the verse must be contextualised and interpreted [*mu'awwal*].[329] In another narration, it is read as *li-nu'lim*, with a *ḍamma* (u) on the *nūn* and a *kasra* (i) on the *lām*, meaning: 'so that we may show them.'

[328] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks
[329] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks). Details of the types of interpretation [*ta'wīl*] will follow in verse 40, p. 268-274.

فَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْحَقِّ

*So follow the path of truth*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the meaning is: 'If you know that it is necessary for Allah to be attributed with existence [*wujūd*], power [*qudra*], will [*irāda*], and knowledge [*'ilm*], then follow the path of truth [*ḥaqq*], meaning the judgement [*ḥukm*] which is in conformity with reality [*muṭābiq lil-wāqi'*].'

The word *sabīl* means 'path' [*ṭarīq*] and is attached to the word *al-ḥaqq* for clarification [*bayān*]. It is also possible that in this sentence the possessed noun [*muḍāf*] could have been omitted [*maḥdhūf*], implying: 'the path of the people of truth' [*ṭarīq ahl al-ḥaqq*]. The intended meaning is: 'the belief of *Ahl al-Sunna* in the necessary attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] of Allah ﷻ.'

وَاطَّرِحِ الرَّيْبَ

*And shun all doubts*

This means: 'remove all doubts.' The noble author said that the word *rayb* is the plural [*jam'*] of *rayba*, which means doubtfulness—that which does not produce knowledge of the soundness or falsehood of something. It is also possible that in this sentence two possessed nouns [*muḍāfayn*] could have been omitted [*maḥdhūf*], implying: 'and shun the path of the people of doubt,' referring to those who reject that Allah possesses the *ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*.[130]

## Verse 29

حَيَاتُهُ كَذَا الْكَلَامُ السَّمْعُ ثُمَّ الْبَصَرُ بَدِي أَتَانَا السَّمْعُ

*His life, likewise, speech, hearing, and sight,*
*Are established through textual proofs*

[130] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 28)





حَيَاتُهُ

*His life*

The fourth attribute of meaning is *ḥayāt*. It is necessary that Allah ﷻ be attributed with life [*ḥayāt*], which is without beginning and without end.

*Ḥayāt* is defined as a pre-eternal attribute [*ṣifa azaliyya*] necessitated by knowledge [*'ilm*]. This means that if Allah ﷻ is attributed with knowledge, it necessitates that He be attributed with life.

### 29.1 *The rational and textual proof for life* [*ḥayāt*]

The rational proof that it is necessary for Allah ﷻ to have power, will, and knowledge, is also the proof that it is necessary for Allah ﷻ to have life. It is inconceivable that a being with such attributes could be without life. For created life, the sense of touch, smell, emotion and so forth, are necessary. The life of Allah ﷻ is other than that. Allah ﷻ has complete knowledge of all the areas of experience that created life is capable of experiencing, by virtue of the attribute of knowledge.

As for the textual proof, Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Allah! There is no God but Him, the Living, the Self-Subsisting.*﴾ [2:255] And He says: ﴿*And put your trust in Him Who lives and dies not,*﴾ [25:58] and: ﴿*He is the Living: There is no god but Him. Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion.*﴾ [40:65]

كَذَا الْكَلَامُ

*Likewise, speech*

The fifth attribute of meaning is *kalām*. It is necessary [*wājib*] that Allah be attributed with speech [*kalām*].

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *kalām* is defined as a pre-eternal attribute [*ṣifa azaliyya*] of the Essence of Allah without letter [*ḥarf*] and sound [*ṣawt*], free from preceding [*taqdīm*] or following [*ta'khīr*], grammar [*i'rāb*], and construction [*binā'*]. It is free from

silence [*sukūt*], so that He does not need to plan before speaking. His speech is also free from any hidden defects applicable to human beings making Him incapable of speaking, such as being mute [*kharas*] or being too young [*tufūliyya*].

The *Mu'tazila* said that His speech consists of letters [*hurūf*] and sounds [*aṣwāt*] that are created and are [therefore] not part of the Essence. Thus, when they say that Allah is Speaking [*Mutakallim*], they intend that Allah creates the speech within something. This is because of their belief that speech is none other than letters and sounds. This is rejected since the literal meaning of the word 'speech' is widely known and accepted as emanating from within a person and that it is merely manifested externally through sound waves. Al-Akhṭal, the Arab poet, said:

إن الكلام لفي الفؤاد وإنما  جعل اللسان على الفؤاد دليلا

*Verily, speech resides in the heart,*
*And the tongue is merely its messenger*

Al-Akhṭal implies in this verse that speech is the meaning that the words convey, and this we call self-speech [*kalām nafsī*]. This distinction proved critical in *Ash'arī* thought.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the speech of Allah refers to *kalām nafsī*, meaning the pre-eternal attribute of the Essence, and *kalām lafẓī*, meaning the created speech (which we use when reciting the Qur'an). It is upon this meaning that we understand the words of 'Ā'isha: "Everything between the two covers of the Book [*muṣḥaf*] is the *kalām* of Allah." Thus, anyone who denies that what lies between the two covers of the Qur'an is the speech of Allah has committed disbelief [*kufr*], unless he intends by it other than *kalām nafsī*. While it is clear that *kalām lafẓī*[331] is contingent [*ḥādith*], it is not permissible [*lā yajūz*] to say: 'the Qur'an is created,' except in the appropriate places of learning [*maqām al-ta'līm*], since 'Qur'an' is also used to refer to *kalām nafsī*, the pre-eternal attribute of the Essence, in a metaphorical sense [*majāz*],

[331] *Kalām lafẓī* is also referred to as *kalām ḥissī*.





according to the stronger opinion [*rājiḥ*]. This is because the layman might imagine, in general, that the Qur'an is created, and that contingency is part of the Essence of Allah. It was for this very reason [i.e., refusing to say, 'the Qur'an is created,'] that the great Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal[332] was beaten and imprisoned.[333]

Imam al-Qushayrī ﷺ said that through this attribute, Allah ﷻ commands, forbids, informs, and communicates. The speech of Allah is expressed in many languages, for example, the Qur'an in Arabic, the *Injīl* in Aramaic, and the *Tawrāt* in Hebrew. These revealed Books contain the meanings of the speech of Allah.[334]

### 29.2 *The rational and textual proof for speech* [*kalām*]

It has been proved that Allah is unlike His creation, thus it is impossible that His speech is physically [*ḥissī*] audible with sound. Therefore, if Allah is Speaking [*Mutakallim*]—and there is no other meaning for speaking—then the speech of Allah subsists in His Essence, without sounds and letters. This speech is without beginning or ending.[335]

[332] He is Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal Abū 'Abdullah al-Shaybānī, one of the four founding Imams of the schools of law of *Ahl al-Sunna* and author of the famous *Musnad*. He was born in 164 H. and died in 241 H.

[333] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 29). The details of *kalām nafsī* and *kalām lafẓī* will be discussed in verse 41, p. 274-278.

[334] "45. Allah's ﷻ speech (recited) in Arabic is called Qur'an, in Aramaic [*Suryānī*] it is called *Injīl*, and in Hebrew it is called *Tawrāt*; but the Qur'an is also literally [*ḥaqīqa*] Allah's speech, and so are the Thora and the Gospel..." (Al-Qushayrī, *al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl*, p. 6-64/23-81)

"47. The Creator's speech being called Qur'an, *Tawrāt*, and *Injīl*, does not imply multiplicity of His speech, just ■ He is called Allah in Arabic, *Ḫuḍ* in Persian, and *Tanrī* in Turkish, yet is One." (Ibid.)

[335] Imam Mālik gave the most concise statement of this belief when he said: "The Qur'an is the speech [*kalām*] of Allah, the speech of Allah is of Him [*minhu*], and nothing created [*makhlūq*] is of Allah." (Ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Masālik fī Sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭa' Imām Mālik*, p. 25; Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 7, p. 416 [*Mālik al-Imām*]; cf. Al-Bayhaqī, *Allah's Names and Attributes* [*Al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt*], p. 59)

That Allah ﷻ is Speaking is also proved textually [*dalīl samʿī*], through the consensus of the Muslims [*ijmāʿ al-umma*], and the mass transmission [*mutawātir*] from the Prophets.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Allah spoke to Mūsā.*﴾ [4:164]

### 29.3 *How Mūsā ﷺ spoke to his Lord*

People disagree regarding how Mūsā ﷺ recognised the speech of Allah when he had not heard it before. Some say that he heard words without letters or sounds, and without pause [*tuqṭī*] or breath [*nafas*], and then knew that it could not be the speech of man, but must be the speech [*kalām*] of the Lord of the worlds. Others said that he heard speech that did not come from any direction, and so he knew that it was not of human origin. It is said that his entire body heard it and so he knew that it was the speech of Allah. It is said that the miracle indicated that it was the speech of Allah when he was told to cast down his staff and it became a serpent. That was proof of the truth of the matter. It is said that he concealed something inside himself, which only the One Who knows the unseen worlds would know, and Allah informed him of that and so he knew that he was addressed by Allah.[130]

## السَّمْعُ ثُمَّ البَصَرْ

## *Hearing, and sight*

The sixth attribute of meaning is hearing [*samʿ*]. It is necessary [*wājib*] that Allah be attributed with hearing, which is a pre-eternal attribute [*ṣifa azaliyya*] of the Essence connected to all that exists [*mawjūdāt*], i.e., to all things that are audible.

[130] *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* (vol. 2, p. 213);
cf. *Classical Commentary of the Holy Qur'an*, 2:75 (vol. 1, p. 282)





The hearing of Allah ﷻ perceives things with ■ perception that is complete and all-encompassing. It is not through conceptualisation or contemplation, nor is His hearing such that it is affected by sound waves, as sound can propagate through media other than air and such. His hearing is different to the hearing of created beings and therefore negates the defect of deafness.[131]

The seventh attribute of meaning is sight [*baṣar*]. It is necessary [*wājib*] that Allah ﷻ be attributed with sight, which is a pre-eternal attribute [*ṣifa azaliyya*] of the Essence connected to all visible things within the creation. The sight of Allah ﷻ encompasses everything completely. It does not indulge in imagination [*takhayyul*], nor does it evaluate [*tawahhum*], function by an impression being made on some sense organ, or ■ even reached by a current of air.[132]

## بِذِي أَتَانَا السَّمْعُ

## *Are established through textual proof*

### 29.4 *The proof for hearing [samʿ] and sight [baṣar]*

The proof for the establishment of the attributes of life, speech, hearing, and sight, is the Book of Allah, the Sunna of the Prophet ﷺ and the consensus [*ijmāʿ*] of the believers.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*There is nothing like unto him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*﴾ [42:11]

[131] Allah's hearing is an all-encompassing hearing, which means that He ﷻ hears all things, all the time, and all at once. Allah is not in need of technology or sound to hear. For Him, there ■ no difference between what is near and what is far, because Allah is not in a place. His hearing is not subject to wearying and waning, nor ■ it subject to change; wearying, waning, and change, are not befitting Allah's Essence.

[132] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Ithāf al-Murīd Sharh Jawhara al-Tawhīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)

## Verse 30

فَهَلْ لَهُ إِدْرَاكٌ أَوْ لاَ خُلْفُ  وَعِنْدَ قَوْمٍ صَحَّ فِيهِ الوَقْفُ

*Is perception to be attributed to Him or not,*
*there are differences of opinion,*
*And according to ■ group,*
*it is correct to suspend judgement*

There are seven necessary attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] of Allah according to the *Ash'arī* school. Some differences of opinion exist about an eighth attribute: perception [*idrāk*], which includes the sensory perception of smell, taste, and touch. The noble author asks the question: 'Does Allah ﷻ have an additional attribute called *idrāk*?'

### 30.1 *How scholars define perception [idrāk]*

Scholars of *tawḥīd* define smell, taste, and touch, as follows:

- Smell [*shamm*] is a faculty placed in the two protruding lumps on the front of the brain, which are like the two nipples of the breasts; by this faculty, odours are perceived by way of connecting the cartilage of the nose with the air that has assumed the properties of the odour.
- Taste [*dhawq*] is a faculty spread out in the nerves situated on the tongue; by this faculty flavours, are perceived through the mixing of the saliva reaching the nerve endings.
- Touch [*lams*] is a faculty spread throughout the body; by this faculty, heat and cold, moisture and dryness—and the likes—are perceived at the moment of contact.[339]

[339] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya* (p. 17-18); cf. *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (p. 18-19)





### 30.2 *The various opinions regarding idrāk*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that, in summary, there are three opinions. Some affirmed it, some negated it, and some suspended judgement:[340]

- The *Ash'aris* reject the view that *idrāk* is a necessary attribute, mainly because it lacks textual support. There is no verse or tradition that states Allah smells or tastes.
- Some suspended judgement, and this is the more correct opinion since there is no sufficient proof for or against it.
- The *Māturīdis*, the other major theological school of Sunni Islam, hold the view that *idrāk* is an attribute of meaning. These eight necessary attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] in addition to the five attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*] gives us, according to them, the sum of thirteen necessary attributes.[341]

[340] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 30)
[341] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks

# CHAPTER SIX

## VERSE 31

حَيٌّ عَلِيمٌ قَادِرٌ مُرِيدٌ  سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ مَا يَشَاءُ يُرِيدُ

*Living, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Willing*
*All-Hearing, All-Seeing, whatever He wishes, He wills*

The noble author mentions the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*]. These are essentially derived from the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] discussed previously and are in reality their active forms. For example, Allah has will; this means He is Willing. He has power; this means He is All-Powerful, and ■ forth.

### 31.1 *The number of attributes pertaining to meaning [ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya]*

There are seven *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* and they include:

- Living [*Ḥayy*]
- All-Knowing [*'Alīm*]
- All-Powerful [*Qādir*]
- Willing [*Murīd*]
- All-Hearing [*Samī'*]
- All-Seeing [*Baṣīr*]
- Speaking [*Mutakallim*]

### 31.2 *A minor linguistic controversy regarding these attributes*

There is a minor debate about whether the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* are in fact technically *ṣifāt*. Imam al-Dasūqī argues, and agrees with Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, that they cannot be called *ṣifāt* because they merely express states.





For example, the phrase 'willing' expresses the 'state' of someone who possesses the attribute of 'will.' States are temporary, whereas attributes endure. Therefore, states cannot logically be called attributes according to them. Al-Dasūqī and others affirm twelve or thirteen attributes that are necessary, and not twenty, as in the case of Imam al-Sanūsī and his followers.

Al-Dasūqī[342] goes a little further and even considers existence [*wujūd*] to be a state and not an attribute. The number of attributes that are necessary is twelve according to him. This is a minor linguistic dispute, and ought not to exercise any divisive influence on the *umma*.[343]

### 31.3 *The view of the Mu'tazila regarding the ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*

The *Mu'tazila* denied the *ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*, but accepted the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*. Their reasoning for doing so was that Allah is perfect and complete in Himself and is not in need, for example, of an attribute of knowledge by which He knows, for He is All-Knowing in His Essence. They claimed that the logical consequence of the *ṣifāt al-ma'ānī* was multiplicity of pre-eternal entities [*ta'addud al-qudamā'*]. This reasoning was refuted by the entirety of *Ahl al-Sunna*.

[342] He is Imam Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz Abū al-Majd b. Quraysh, the pole of saints [*quṭb*], and his lineage goes back to Imam al-Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ. Imam al-Dasūqī was born in the town of Dasūq, in the year 633 H., and was raised in an Egyptian environment of piety and righteousness, where he committed himself to the memorisation of the Noble Qur'an and the Islamic sciences, especially to the fundamentals of jurisprudence [*uṣūl al-fiqh*] according to the school of Imam al-Shāfi'ī.

[343] *Ḥāshiya al-Dasūqī 'alā Umm al-Barāhīn*; cf. Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity* (p. 71-72)

## حَيٌّ

### *Living*

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that the first of the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* is that Allah ﷻ is Living [*Ḥayy*]. Since life [*ḥayāt*] is necessary for Allah, it is also necessary that He must be Living. This is known in the religion through the Qur'an and Prophetic narrations—it cannot be interpreted to mean anything else. There is also consensus amongst the scholars concerning this.

## عَلِيمٌ

### *All-Knowing*

The second of the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* is that Allah ﷻ is All-Knowing [*'Alīm*]. Allah is All-Knowing and His knowledge encompasses every detail of all possible things [*mumkināt*].

## قَادِرٌ

### *All-Powerful*

The third of the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* is that Allah ﷻ is All-Powerful [*Qādir*]. Since power [*qudra*] is necessary for Allah, it is also necessary for Him to be *Qādir*. Allah's *qudra* encompasses everything that is possible [*mumkināt*]. He creates whatever He wills, and He does not create what He does not will.





### 31.4 *The source of the statement [manṭūq] and what is inferred from it [mafhūm]*

In logic, every statement has a *manṭūq* and a *mafhūm*. The *manṭūq* points to the source of the statement and the *mafhūm* to what is inferred from the statement. If we say that Zayd is sitting, then it can be inferred that Zayd is not standing. Therefore, from the statement that Allah is *'Alīm* and *Qādir*, it is inferred that He must be Living as well. The proof that Allah is *'Alīm* and *Qādir* is therefore also proof that He is Living. His life, however, is by Himself and not by anyone or anything else, and therefore not subject to change as is the case with created, contingent life.

## مُرِيدٌ

### *Willing*

The fourth of the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* is that Allah ﷻ is Willing [*Murīd*]. Allah is the One Who wills, since will [*irāda*] is necessary for Him ﷻ. If His will were to be connected to something that is possible [*mumkin*] but is non-existent, then it would not be brought into existence. Everything that He wills, He wills because He wishes to will it.

## سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

### *All-Hearing, All-Seeing*

The fifth and sixth *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* are that He ﷻ is All-Hearing [*Samī'*] and All-Seeing [*Baṣīr*]. Allah ﷻ is *Samī'*, which means that He hears every sound, and *Baṣīr*, which means that He sees everything. He is not occupied by His seeing so that He does not hear something; one thing does not prevent Him from the other. He hears and sees everything simultaneously.

مَا يَشَا يُرِيدُ

*What He wishes, He wills*

### 31.5 *Allah's will [irāda] and His wish [mashī'a], and how they are connected to His knowledge and His life*

Will, as previously mentioned, is an attribute that specifies the phenomenon with one of the traits possible for it. For example, tallness and shortness are possible for Zayd. Will, then, specifies Zayd with either tallness or shortness. If we say that the quality specified for Zayd is tallness, then Allah's power brings tallness out of non-existence into existence. In summary, will specifies, and power manifests.

If Allah did not have a will, then there would be no power, because power is an outcome of will. If Allah would not be Powerful, then the creation as we know it would not exist. It is not possible to intend something without having knowledge of it. To bring the creation into existence there must be knowledge on how to create it. If Allah ﷻ had no knowledge then He would not have will, and He would be powerless. As previously mentioned, Allah must have life as well. Without life, He ﷻ would lack knowledge, will, and power. Without these attributes, there would be no creation whatsoever.

Furthermore, these attributes of Allah are complete and He manifests them in actuality. Something exists in actuality [*fi'lan*] or through power [*quwwa*] and *imkān* [possibility]. For example, when we say that a child is knowledgeable [*'ālim*], then by power and possibility, we mean the child has the potential to become knowledgeable. However, right now he is not actually [*fi'lan*] knowledgeable [i.e., a scholar]. The attributes of Allah are not by *quwwa* and *imkān* but they exist *fi'lan*—in actuality, and not potentially. All the attributes are complete and perfect without any doubt. To describe the attributes without perfection is a defect, and a defect for Allah is impossible.[344]

[344] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥid* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)



## VERSE 32

مُتَكَلِّمٌ ثُمَّ صِفَاتُ الذَّاتِ  لَيْسَتْ بِغَيْرٍ أَوْ بِعَيْنِ الذَّاتِ

*Speaking, then the attributes of the Essence,*
*Are neither other than the Essence,*
*nor the Essence itself*

The word *mutakallimun* is pronounced *mutkallimun* with a *sukūn* on the *tā'* in order to keep the rhythm of the poetic metre. This means that, in the same way that it is necessary that Allah has the attribute of speech [*kalām*], it is also necessary that He ﷻ is Speaking [*Mutakallim*].

### 32.1 *The view of the Mu'tazila regarding the speech of Allah* ﷻ

As previously mentioned, the *Mu'tazila*, whilst affirming that speech is an attribute of Allah, deny that it is a pre-eternal attribute. In their view, the word *kalām* can only refer to the words and letters of the Qur'an, which Allah ﷻ created in *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*.[345] In other words, the position of the *Mu'tazila* is that speech is an attribute of Allah; however, it is limited to the words and letters that He creates in the preserved tablet, and is thus not a pre-eternal attribute of Allah.

### 32.2 *The view of Ahl al-Sunna regarding the speech of Allah* ﷻ

The response of *Ahl al-Sunna* to the view of the *Mu'tazila* is that the word *kalām* can indeed be used to mean 'words,' but this is called verbal speech [*kalām lafẓī*].

[345] The preserved tablet in which is recorded the Divine decree of Allah ﷻ through the angel Jibrīl ﷺ.

## مُتَكَلِّمٌ

## *Speaking*

The seventh of the *ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya* is that He ﷻ is Speaking [*Mutakallim*]. There is no difference of opinion amongst the schools [*madhāhib*] regarding this. The difference of opinion is on the meaning [*ma'nā*] of His speech and regarding whether it is pre-eternal or created. The meaning of *kalām* was explained previously. As for it being pre-eternal [*qadīm*], this will be explained in verse 41 where the noble author says: "*And declare the Qur'an transcendent* [*nazzih al-Qur'āna*]... *Above contingency* ['*an al-ḥudūth*]."

Allah Almighty's speech is thus an attribute subsisting in His Essence and He ﷻ is pre-eternally commanding, prohibiting, narrating, and promising.

It is not a speech consisting of letters, sounds, or grammar. These elements are merely indications of His speech.[346]

The Qur'an, being Allah's speech, is fundamentally uncreated. However, the printed copies of the Qur'an that we have are created. Indeed, they are originated in time. Yet, importantly, its meanings are Allah's speech, and Allah's speech is neither created, nor originated in time.[347]

[346] Imam al-Qushayrī relates that Abū Bakr al-Shiblī said: "The One is known before any definition and before any letters." and adds: "This is an unequivocal statement from al-Shiblī, that the Essence of the Pre-eternal ﷻ has no definition, nor does His speech consist of letters." (Al-Qushayrī, *Epistle on Sufism* [*Al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*], p. 5)

[347] Ibn 'Arabī said that Allah ﷻ does not speak after being previously silent. He speaks with a speech that is pre-eternal like the rest of His attributes, whether it is His knowledge, will, or power. Allah ﷻ spoke to Mūsā ﷺ. He ﷻ named His speech the Divine Bestowal [*al-Tanzīl*] through the Book of Psalms [*Zabūr*], *Tawrāt*, the Gospel [*Injīl*], and the Qur'an. All of this is without letters [*ḥurūf*], sounds [*aṣwāt*], tones [*nagham*], and languages [*lughāt*]. Rather, Allah is the Creator of sounds, letters, tones, and languages. (*Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, vol. 1, p. 82)





### 32.3 *An introduction into the dispute regarding the attributes [ṣifāt]*

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that when the scholars of *tawḥid*, known as the people of truth [*ahl al-ḥaqq*], mentioned that Allah ﷻ has attributes [*ṣifāt*], they were opposed by others who maintained that Allah does not have attributes. Their argument was that these attributes are either contingent [*ḥādith*] or pre-eternal [*qadīm*].

If they were created [*makhlūq*], then this necessitates that created things exist in Allah, which would mean that His knowledge, power, and life would be created and not *qadīm*. On the other hand, if each attribute were individually *qadīm*, then we would have multiple entities that are *qadīm*, which is tantamount to creating multiple gods. The Trinitarian Christians became separated from the belief in the oneness of God [*tawḥid*] when they added two more entities that are *qadīm*: the Son and the Holy Ghost. Some theological critics claim that *Ahl al-Sunna* believe in multiple pre-eternal entities, but there is consensus amongst the scholars that there is only One Who is *Qadīm*. In other words, *qadīm* cannot be a multiplicity.

In response, the noble author went on to say:

## ثُمَّ صِفَاتُ الذَّاتِ

## *Then the attributes of the Essence*

The attributes [*ṣifāt*] of Allah are descriptions of the Essence [*Dhāt*] of Allah ﷻ. The Essence is an entity. The Essence is something, and yet, seemingly paradoxical, each attribute of that Essence appears as something other than the Essence. The description and the described appear as two different things.

However, the attributes subsist in the Essence of Allah, a Divine, inseparable whole that cannot be represented otherwise. These *ṣifāt* are not other than the description of the Essence of Allah, Who is the Necessary Existent [*Wājib al-wujūd*].

The *ṣifāt* and the *Dhāt* are understood as being necessary [*wājib*]. We know Allah ﷻ only through His *ṣifāt*, and not through His *Dhāt*; through understanding His attributes and not through

His Essence. However, as mere beings, we do not know all the *ṣifāt* of the *Dhāt* of Allah. We know only what has been mentioned in the Qur'an, and what the intellect ['*aql*] proves to us through His glorious creation.

لَيْسَتْ بِغَيْرِ

*Are neither other than the Essence*

We (*Ahl al-Sunna*) say: Allah's *ṣifāt* are not His *Dhāt*, and simultaneously, not other than His *Dhāt* either. There is, consequently, not the contradiction of multiple pre-eternal entities [*ta'addud al-qudamā'*]. His *ṣifāt* and His *Dhāt* are essentially 'One.' It is not one of ten in the sense that one is part of ten. Hence, the *ṣifāt* are not part of His *Dhāt* as one is part of ten. They are a whole. If we say that the *ṣifāt* are part of Allah's Essence, then that leads to multiple divinities consisting of His Essence and His attributes, which is, technically, polytheism [*shirk*].

أَوْ بِعَيْنِ الذَّاتِ

*Nor the Essence itself*

If we say that the attributes of the Essence [*ṣifāt al-Dhāt*] are pre-eternal [*qadīm*], yet different from the *Dhāt*, then the *Dhāt* must be contingent [*ḥādith*] and not pre-eternal [*qadīm*]. This is because, as previously stated, there cannot be multiple distinct entities that share in the attribute of *qadīm*. The *Dhāt* is not the *ṣifāt*, as the *ṣifāt* are descriptions of the *Dhāt*, and they exist through the *Dhāt*, and therefore, have to be *qadīm*. If Allah's *ṣifāt* are not *qadīm*, then contingencies must subsist in the *Dhāt*, which then makes it also contingent. For that reason, we say that His *ṣifāt* are neither other than, nor the same as, His *Dhāt*.[348]

[348] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that in summary the attributes are:

- The Essence itself ['*ayn al-Dhāt*], and this is the self-signifying attribute [*ṣifa nafsiyya*].[349]
- Other than the Essence, and these are the attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*] since they point to the non-existence of these actions (such as being dependent, having a beginning, having an ending, and so forth).
- Neither the Essence itself, nor other than the Essence, and these are the existential attributes [*ṣifāt wujūdiyya*], and they are called the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*].
- Neither the Essence itself, nor other than the Essence, and these are the apprehended attributes [*ṣifāt i'tibāriyya*] and are called the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*].
- The comprehensive attributes [*ṣifāt al-jāmi'a*], such as the Majestic [*al-Jalāl*], the Beautiful [*al-Jamāl*], the All-Sufficing [*al-Ghanī*], and so forth.[350]

## VERSE 33

فَقُدْرَةٌ بِمُمْكِنٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ  بِلَا تَنَاهِي مَا بِهِ تَعَلَّقَتْ

*Power is connected to the possible,*
*Without limitation to that which it is connected to*

فَقُدْرَةٌ بِمُمْكِنٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ

*Power is connected to the possible*

[349] The *ṣifa nafsiyya* is existence [*wujūd*].
[350] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 32)

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the prepositional phrase [*jār majrūr*] 'to the possible' [*bi-mumkinin*] is connected to 'connected' [*ta'allaqat*], the verb following it. The noble author placed it at the beginning, indicating restriction [*ḥaṣr*]. It is ■ if he is saying: 'It is not connected [*lam tata'allaq*] to anything except [*illā*] the possible [*mumkin*].'

### 33.1 *Connected [muta'alliq] and not connected [ghayr muta'alliq] attributes*

We have thus far elaborated on two categories of attributes: *ṣifāt al-salbiyya* and *ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*. The *ṣifāt al-salbiyya* negate anything unbefitting of Allah's majesty, such a beginning or an ending. The *ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya* affirm the positive attributes of Allah. These include life, absolute will, absolute power, and so forth.

The *ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya* are further divided into two categories: *muta'alliq* and *ghayr muta'alliq*. The *muta'alliq ṣifāt* are connected to the creation and its actions, while the *ghayr muta'alliq ṣifāt* are not connected to anything else. They only describe a state such ■ life. Allah's 'life' is not connected to anything else.

The *muta'alliq ṣifāt* include power [*qudra*], will [*irāda*], knowledge [*'ilm*], speech [*kalām*], hearing [*sam'*], and sight [*baṣar*]. These *ṣifāt* are connected to all actions and changes.

### 33.2 *The connection [ta'alluq] of power and will*

Power [*qudra*] and will [*irāda*] are connected to all possible things [*mumkināt*] only, and are not in any way connected to the necessary [*wājib*] and the impossible [*mustaḥīl*].

Nothing is *wājib* upon Allah ﷻ, and for this reason, His power and will are not connected to that which is necessary. If it would be connected to the necessary, this would imply that Allah ﷻ is forced to will and create, which is not the case.

As for the impossible, Allah ﷻ will never create these because He knows that they will not become existent. Something that is not *mustaḥīl* in itself becomes *mustaḥīl* only because Allah knows that it is not going to become existent, thus, His *qudra* is not connected to it.





An example is in the faith of Abū Lahab.[351] His having faith in Allah is not impossible in itself [*bi-dhātihī*]. It was possible that he could embrace Islam, except that in the pre-eternal knowledge of Allah, he was not destined to become Muslim. It is, therefore, impossible that it would happen in the knowledge of Allah. Allah's power and will were not connected to the faith of Abū Lahab.[352]

In summary, *qudra* is an effecting attribute. It is connected to something of which its existence was previously non-existent. It is connected to everything that is *mumkin*, i.e., that which ■ not impossible [*mustaḥīl*] or necessary [*wājib*]. In other words, not every possible thing will be created; it will only be created if Allah's *qudra* is connected to it.[353]

There are up to three connections [*ta'alluqāt*] in this discussion.

1. Pre-eternal potentiality [*ṣulūḥī qadīm*]
2. Pre-eternal effectiveness [*tanjīzī qadīm*]
3. Contingent effectiveness [*tanjīzī ḥādith*]

There is no contingent potentiality [*ṣulūḥī ḥādith*] in any of the *ṣifāt*. The *ta'alluqāt* only apply to the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] according to the majority of the theologians; according to some, they apply to the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*]. None hold the view that the *ta'alluqāt* apply to both. *Qudra* has pre-eternal potentiality [*ṣulūḥī qadīm*] and contingent effectiveness [*tanjīzī ḥādith*]. If *qudra* were to have the *ta'alluq* of *tanjīzī qadīm*, this would mean He ﷻ created things pre-eternally, which would mean that the world would be pre-eternal, which is false. Therefore, *qudra* does not have the *ta'alluq* of *tanjīzī qadīm*.

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[351] He is Abū Lahab, the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ. He hounded the Prophet and spent his life denouncing all that the he ﷺ came with. He is named 'father of the flame' in the Qur'an.

[352] The fact that the power of Allah is not related to the necessary and the impossible does not entail powerlessness, but rather indicates the perfection of Allah.

[353] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdī Hendricks)

بِلَا تَنَاهِي مَا بِهِ تَعَلَّقَتْ

*Without limitation to that which it is connected to*

This means that Allah's power is without limitation or ending [*bi-lā tanāhī*] regarding that which it is connected to, so that nothing is excluded from it. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, Allah is over all things Powerful* [*Qadīr*],﴾ [2:284] and: ﴿*And He created all things and determined them precisely.*﴾ [25:2]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that 'all things' [*kulli shay'*] in these verses means: 'all possible things' [*kulli shay' mumkin*].

### 33.3 *Imam al-Laqānī repeats the word ta'alluq*

It was mentioned earlier that the *qudra* has two aspects, potential power [*qudra ṣulūḥī*] and effective power [*qudra tanjīzī*], the latter of which has an actual connection to contingent things.

Imam al-Bājūrī said regarding the word *ta'alluq* in this verse that there is no repetition [*īṭā'*] here, but rather perfection and completeness of the *rajaz* style of poetry. It is correct that the first be carried upon the meaning of *tanjīzī* and the second upon the meaning of *ṣulūḥī*.[354]

## Verse 34

وَوَحْدَةً أَوْجِبْ لَهَا وَمِثْلَ ذِي إِرَادَةٌ وَالعِلْمُ لَكِنْ عَمَّ ذِي

*Affirm oneness for it, and the like for,*
*Will, and knowledge, which is, however, more general*

وَوَحْدَةً أَوْجِبْ لَهَا

*Affirm oneness for it*

[354] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 33)





### 34.1 *Allah's qudra is one*

This means that Allah's power [*qudra*] is not a multiplicity. Allah ﷻ is Powerful [*Qādir*] over all that which is possible [*mumkin*], and by necessity, there must be oneness in His *qudra*.

It is therefore *wājib* to believe that the *qudra* is one, since the proof—rational [*ma'qūl*] and transmitted [*manqūl*]—does not indicate otherwise. This means that there exists no power that is pre-eternal and eternal, except for the *qudra* of Allah.

وَمِثْلُ ذِي إِرَادَةٌ

*And the like for will*

### 34.2 *The similarity between Allah's will and His power*

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*You do not will anything except by the will of Allah, the Lord of the worlds.*﴾ [81:29]

The demonstrative pronoun [*ism al-ishāra*] *dhī* is connected to the word 'power' [*qudra*]. The meaning is that the will of Allah is similar to the *qudra* in three aspects:

- It is connected to everything possible [*kulli mumkin*]
- It is without ending [*'adam al-tanāhī*]
- It is one

Power [*qudra*] is connected to bringing things into existence [*ījād*] and non-existence [*'adam*], while the connection [*ta'alluq*] of will [*irāda*] is in specifying [*takhṣīṣ*] how this manifests. Allah ﷻ wills what He knows is going to happen, and He does not will what He Knows is not going to happen. When Allah wants to create something, He says: ﴿*'Be!' And it is* [*kun fa-yakūn*].﴾

Allah's command [*amr*] 'Be!' [*kun*] is between the *kāf* and the *nūn*, which means He creates instantly, and that nothing can go against His will.[355]

He ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it: 'Be!' And it is.*﴾ [36:82]

[355] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 34)

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the intended meaning of this, "and Allah ﷻ alone knows best,"[356] is: when Allah's will and power are connected to something, it is brought into existence instantly [*baraza ḥālan*]. The imperative *kun fa-yakūn* is therefore ■ type of metaphor called *kināya*, which alludes to the immediateness with which the will and power brings something into existence, and that nothing can ever oppose it [*'adam al-takhalluf*]. What is intended in this Qur'anic verse is not taken on its apparent meaning [*ẓāhir*], which indicates that when He ﷻ wills something, He says the word *kun*.[357]

In summary, Allah's will and power are connected to what is possible [*mumkin*]. They are not connected to that which is necessary [*wājib*] or impossible [*mustaḥīl*]. Like *qudra*, will is one, and not ■ multiplicity.

*Irāda* is both pre-eternal potentiality [*ṣulūḥī qadīm*] and pre-eternal effectiveness [*tanjīzī qadīm*]—because He ﷻ can specify potentiality and He specifies those attributes pre-eternally.

وَالعِلْمُ

*And knowledge*

### 34.3 *The similarity between Allah's knowledge and His power*

The word *'ilm* (knowledge) is connected [*ma'ṭūf*] to the word *irāda* (will) since it is similar to *qudra* (power) in three aspects as well. Allah's knowledge is like His *qudra* with respect to it:

- Being one, not multiple
- Being connected to all possible things [*mumkināt*]
- Being without ending [*'adam al-tanāhī*]

[356] This reflects the humility of the scholars of old, in that they never attribute the absolute truth to themselves, but rather to Allah ﷻ alone.
[357] This is impossible for the Creator, ■ it would imply that He ﷻ is dependent on something. He ﷻ is therefore not dependent on the word *kun* to create anything. The use of the word *kun* is only for us as human beings to understand the force and speed of the Divine will and power.





لَكِنْ عَمَّ ذِي

*Which is, however, more general*

Imam 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī said that the noble author used the word 'however' [*lakin*] to alter his statement, indicating that although the knowledge of Allah ﷻ is like the *qudra*, it is not restricted, i.e., it ■ not connected to all possible things only, as is the case with *qudra* and *irāda*.[358]

## VERSE 35

وَعَمَّ أَيْضاً وَاجِباً وَالْمُمْتَنِعْ  وَمِثْلُ ذَا كَلَامُهُ فَلْتَتَّبِعْ

*And generalize it to include the necessary and the impossible,*
*And likewise with His speech, so follow accordingly*

وَعَمَّ أَيْضاً وَاجِباً وَالْمُمْتَنِعْ

*And generalise it to include the necessary and the impossible*

### 35.1 *The ta'alluq of knowledge*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the knowledge of Allah is connected to:

- All that is possible [*mumkināt*]
- Necessary [*wājibāt*]
- And impossible [*mustaḥīlāt*]

This is because His knowledge encompasses everything. Allah ﷻ indicates this general connection [*'umūm al-ta'alluq*] when He says: ﴿*And Allah is the All-Knowing, of everything.*﴾ [2:282] and:

[358] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*

(*Knower of the unseen and the seen* [*ʿĀlim al-ghayb wa-shahāda*].) [6:73] This means what is hidden from us and not apparent to us. The words *ghayb* and *shahāda* apply to us (and not to Allah, for nothing is hidden from Him ﷻ).[359]

Allah's knowledge is vast and unlimited. It encompasses all minute particulars [*juzʾiyyāt*], universals [*kulliyāt*], the seen [*shahāda*], and the unseen [*ghayb*]. He has perfect knowledge of His Essence and attributes.

وَمِثْلُ ذَا كَلَامُهُ فَلْتَسْمَعْ

*And likewise with His speech, so follow accordingly*

The demonstrative pronoun [*ism al-ishāra*] *dhā* is connected to the word 'knowledge' [*ʿilm*] [in the previous part of the verse]. The word 'likewise' [*mithlu*] is the predicate that has been placed at the beginning [*khabar muqaddam*] while 'His speech' [*kalāmuhu*] is the subject [*mubtadaʾ*] that has been placed at the end [*muʾakhar*]. The implied meaning is that the self-speech of Allah [*kalām nafsī*] is a pre-eternal attribute of the Essence and is similar to knowledge in three aspects:

35.2 *The taʿalluq of speech*
Speech is likewise connected to:

- The necessary
- Impossible
- And the possible

The amount of things to which they pertain is without ending [*ʿadam al-tanāhī*].[360]

[359] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 35)
[360] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)



## VERSE 36

وَكُلُّ مَوْجُودٍ أَنِطْ لِلسَّمْعِ بِهْ  كَذَا الْبَصَرْ إِدْرَاكُهُ إِنْ قِيلَ بِهْ

*And everything in existence, connect it to hearing,*
*Likewise, sight, and perception, if it is affirmed*

وَكُلُّ مَوْجُودٍ أَنِطْ لِلسَّمْعِ بِهْ

*And everything in existence, connect it to hearing*

36.1 *The taʿalluq of sight and hearing*
This means that every existent thing is connected to His hearing ﷻ. The word *aniṭ* is a command [*amr*], from the word *ināṭa*, which means 'to attach' or to 'connect.' The word 'every' [*kullu*] is the subject [*mubtadaʾ*], while the sentence *aniṭ lil-samʿi* is the predicate [*khabar*]. Some have said that the *lām* in *lil-samʿi* was added for emphasis, while the word *samʿ* ■ the object [*mafʿūl*] of *aniṭ*. It is therefore necessary that hearing be pre-eternally connected to everything in existence.

كَذَا الْبَصَرْ

*Likewise, sight*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that sight [*baṣar*] is likewise connected to all existent things [*mawjūd*]. The word 'likewise' [*kadhā*] ■ a predicate that has been placed at the beginning [*khabar muqaddam*], while the word *baṣar* is the subject that has been placed at the end [*mubtadaʾ muʾakhar*].[361]

[361] The stylistic approach of 'advancing and delaying' [*taqdīm wa-taʾkhīr*] has many aims and benefits in the Arabic language, such as: restricting the meaning, placing emphasis on the object, placing less emphasis on the actor, restricting an action, and so forth.

In summary, His ﷻ sight and hearing are connected to everything that exists, to all that is possible [*mumkināt*], and all that is necessary [*wājibāt*], bearing in mind their existence is permissible [*jā'iz*]. These include things that can be perceived; they can also be abstract, particular, universal, material, or non-material. Thus, nothing in existence is outside of His knowledge.[362]

36.2 *Hearing and sight:*
*potentiality [ṣulūḥī] and effectiveness [tanjīzī]*

Hearing and sight are connected to all existent things, be they pre-eternal or contingent. When connected to the Essence and attributes of Allah ﷻ, it is pre-eternal effectiveness [*tanjīzī qadim*]; and when connected to the attributes and essences of the creation, it is contingent effectiveness [*tanjīzī ḥādith*] and pre-eternal potentiality [*ṣulūḥī qadīm*].

إِدْرَاكُهُ إِنْ قِيلَ بِهْ

*And perception, if it is affirmed*

Likewise, those who hold perception [*idrāk*] to be an attribute [*ṣifa*] of Allah ﷻ agree that it is connected to every existent thing. The word *idrāk* is connected [*ma'ṭūf*] to the word *baṣar* by an implied particle [*ḥarf 'aṭf muqaddar*].[363] The three opinions regarding *idrāk* being a Divine attribute have been discussed in verse 30 (p. 238-239).[364]

[362] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)
[363] As previously mentioned, *idrāk* refers to sensory perception such as taste, smell, touch, and so forth. There are differences of opinion regarding it being a Divine attribute or not.
[364] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 36)



## VERSE 37

وَغَيْرُ عِلْمٍ هٰذِهِ كَمَا ثَبَتْ ثُمَّ الْحَيَاةُ مَا بِشَيْءٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ

*And (these are) other than knowledge, as affirmed,*
*Followed by life, which is not connected to anything*

وَغَيْرُ عِلْمٍ هٰذِهِ كَمَا ثَبَتْ

*And (these are) other than knowledge, as affirmed*

This means that these four attributes—speech, hearing, sight, and perception—are other than knowledge.

The demonstrative pronoun [*ism al-ishāra*] *hādhihi* is the subject which has been placed at the end [*mubtada' mu'akhar*], while the words *ghayr 'ilmin* form the predicate which has been placed at the beginning [*khabar muqaddam*].

Allah's knowledge is connected to all things permissible [*jā'iz*], necessary [*wājib*], and impossible [*mustaḥīl*]. It is without beginning, and with it He ﷻ knows the minute details of all things. He knows what is, what was, and what will be. His attribute of knowledge is one [*wāḥid*], not multiple, while things that are known [*ma'lūmāt*] are numerous.

ثُمَّ الْحَيَاةُ مَا بِشَيْءٍ تَعَلَّقَتْ

*Followed by life, which is not connected to anything*

### 37.1 Attributes that are not connected [*ghayr muta'alliq ṣifāt*]

Life [*ḥayāt*] is *ghayr muta'alliq*, which means that it is not connected to anything else. It only signifies a state that allows for perception, awareness, and consciousness. In this [same] way, Allah's existence [*wujūd*] is not connected to anything else [either]. His pre-eternality [*qidam*], eternality [*baqā'*], and oneness [*waḥdāniyya*], are, likewise, *ghayr muta'alliq*.[365]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that in summary, the attributes of Allah are divided into four categories:

- Those not connected to anything. These include life [*ḥayāt*], the self-signifying attribute [*al-ṣifa al-nafsiyya*], the attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*], and the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*].
- Those connected to all the categories of rational judgement [*ḥukm 'aqlī*]. They include knowledge [*'ilm*] and speech [*kalām*]. Knowledge is more encompassing, while speech is always indicative of some meaning.
- Those connected to all possible things [*mumkināt*]. They include power [*qudra*] and will [*irāda*].
- Those connected to existent things [*mawjūdāt*]. They include hearing [*sam'*], sight [*baṣar*], and perception [*idrāk*], according to those who accept it as an attribute.[366]

Know that the knowledge of the connections [*ta'alluqāt*] is not obligated for the *mukallaf* because of the difficulty of the subject.

[365] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)
[366] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 37)



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## VERSE 38

وَعِنْدَنَا أَسْمَاؤُهُ العَظِيمَةْ  كَذَا صِفَاتُ ذَاتِهِ قَدِيمَةْ

*And our position is that His great names,*
*Likewise, the attributes of His Essence, are pre-eternal*

### وَعِنْدَنَا

*And our position is*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that it is necessary to believe that the magnificent names [*asmā' al-'aẓīma*] of Allah ﷻ and the attributes of His Essence [*ṣifāt al-Dhāt*] are without beginning and without ending. The noble author began this verse with the adverb [*ẓarf*] *inda* indicating restriction, while the pronoun *-nā* refers to the people of truth [*ahl al-ḥaqq*]. The implied meaning is as follows: 'The great names of Allah ﷻ are without beginning according to the people of truth, which is in contrast to the view of the Mu'tazila.'[367]

### أَسْمَاؤُهُ العَظِيمَةْ

*That His great names*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *asmā'* is the plural of the word 'noun' and 'name' [*ism*]. A name can either refer to the essence [*dhāt*], and this includes the name 'Allah,' which in the Persian language is expressed as *Khudāy*, or it can refer to an attribute [*ṣifa*] (describing the essence) such the All-Knowing [*al-'Alīm*] and the All-Powerful [*al-Qādir*].

[367] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 38)

The word *'aẓīma* means great, majestic, and sacred. They are *'aẓīma* because they are pure from anything lowly that does not befit Allah's majesty, or from Him being referred to in a way other than great and majestic. According to Imam Sa'd al-Taftāzānī, all the names of Allah, by their very nature, are *'aẓīma*.

### 38.1 *The derivation of the word ism and its implications*

Imam al-Qurṭubī[368] states that, if it is true that the word *ism* is derived from *sumuw*, which means elevation [*'uluww*], then Allah ﷻ has always had these names, even before he brought the creation into existence. Allah was elevated before the creation and at the time of creating, and He will remain elevated when the creation no longer exists. This is because creation itself does not have any effect on Allah's great names. This is the view of *Ahl al-Sunna*.

A group held the view that the word *ism* comes from the word *simā* (mark). They believed that Allah ﷻ was pre-eternally without these great names and attributes. It was only when He brought the creation into existence that He acquired them. When the creation no longer exists, He will once again remain without them. This was the view of the *Mu'tazila*.[369]

Imam al-Shumnī[370] said that this is the worst of opinions, even worse than claiming that the Qur'an is created. This was mentioned by 'Allāma al-Amir with some additional notes.

### 38.2 *The superiority of some names over others*

There are differences of opinion regarding the superiority of one name over the other. Some scholars said that there is no preference between them, while others held the view that preference does exist. In the *Yawāqit* [of al-Sha'rānī], it is cited

[368] He is Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Farah al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī. He was of the foremost exegetes of the Qur'an. He authored many important works including the famous *Tafsir* of the Qur'an. He died in 671 H.

[369] *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, Classical Commentary of the Holy Qur'an* (vol. 1, p. 86)

[370] He is Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī al-Qusṭanṭīnī Taqī al-Dīn al-Shumni, a Qur'anic exegete, scholar of Hadith, judge, and grammarian. He died in 872 H.





from Ibn al-'Arabī that the names of Allah are equal because all of them return to the same Essence. The truth is that superiority [*tafāḍul*] exists. The greatest of these names is the majestic name 'Allah.' Sayyid 'Alī Wafā held the view that superiority exists in the names, and said regarding the Word of Allah ﷻ: ﴿*The Word of Allah—that is the highest,*﴾ [9:40] that it refers to the name 'Allah' because it holds a higher degree [*a'lā murtaba*] than the rest of the names. This is observed in the saying of Allah ﷻ: ﴿*And the remembrance of Allah is greater.*﴾ [29:45] This means that the remembrance of the name 'Allah' is greater than the remembrance of any other of His names.[371]

### 38.3 *How the greatest name honours the children of Adam*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that Allah ﷻ conferred benefit upon the children of Adam when he made their fingers and toes form his majestic name. The little finger [*khinṣir*] represents the *alif*; the ring finger [*binṣir*] and the middle finger [*wusṭā*] represent the two *lāms*; and the index finger [*sabāba*] and thumb [*ibhām*] together form the letter *ḥā'*. Likewise, 'Muḥammad' is the greatest name from amongst the Prophets. This is because the form of the human being is found within this name.[372]

Ibn 'Arabī viewed the letters in the name 'Muḥammad' as parts of the human body, where the first letter *mīm* represents the head and consists of the attributes of sight, hearing, and intellect. He stated that the first *mīm* is the head, and that it is the realm of the supreme dominion [*'ālam al-malakūt al-a'lā*] and of the greatest intellect [*al-'aql al-akbar*]. The breast and the arms are under the *ḥā'*, and this is the glorious throne; its numerical value is eight, the number of the angels who carry the throne. The second *mīm* represents the stomach, and this is the realm of dominion [*'ālam al-mulk*]. The hips, the legs, and the feet are from the *dāl*, and this is the stable composition by means of the eternal command.[373]

[371] *Sharh al-Bājūrī* (verse 38)

[372] *Sharh al-Ṣāwī* (verse 38)

[373] Al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (p. 62); cf. Qamar-ul Huda, *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis* (p. 91)

كَذَا صِفَاتُ ذَاتِهِ قَدِيمَةْ

*Likewise, the attributes of His Essence, are pre-eternal*

### 38.4 *The definition of 'attribute' [ṣifa] and its lexical meaning*

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that the Arabic word for attribute is *ṣifa*, which is derived from the root *waṣafa* (to describe). *Ṣifāt* is the plural of *ṣifa*. The term *ṣifa* is used in two basic senses by the scholars of *kalām*.

Firstly, it is simply used to denote the physical or non-physical attributes, or characteristics, of a person or thing. For example, when we say, 'the car is blue,' or, 'Zayd is generous.' Both the 'blueness' of the car and the 'generosity' of Zayd tell us something more about the objects they describe. It is important to note that these attributes are rationally distinguishable from the objects they describe.

Secondly, it is also used in a broader sense to denote both the attributes and the states of something being described. In this sense, it denotes both what may be called personal attributes—like the generosity of Zayd in the previous example—and also what may be called attributes of negation, or non-personal attributes, such as our saying: 'Zayd has a limited lifespan.'

The broad definition of the term attribute [*ṣifa*] also includes the 'states' of the thing described, like our saying: 'Zayd regularly gives charity.' It must be remembered here that 'giving' is a variable state, not a permanent one. Sometimes he gives and sometimes he does not give. Generosity is a personal and more enduring attribute, of which 'giving' is merely an expression. These conceptual distinctions must be kept in mind when we discuss the attributes of Allah ﷻ.[374]

[374] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks



## VERSE 39

وَاخْتِيرَ أَنَّ اسْمَاهُ تَوْقِيفِيَّةْ  كَذَا الصِّفَاتُ فَاحْفَظِ السَّمْعِيَّةْ

*And the chosen position is that,*
*His names are divinely established,*

*Likewise, the attributes, so preserve them as transmitted*

### 39.1 *The names of Allah ﷻ are divinely established [tawqīfiyya]*

The chosen position according to the majority [*jumhūr*] of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that the great names of Allah ﷻ as well as His attributes are divinely established [*tawqīfiyya*]. This means that it is not permissible for anyone to assert an attribute or name for Allah unless there is an explicit text from the Qur'an, a Hadith that is either *ḥasan*[375] or *ṣaḥīḥ*, or the process of scholarly consensus [*ijmā'*].

There is a slight difference of opinion regarding Hadith that are considered weak [*ḍa'īf*]. If one says that we believe a name found in a weak Hadith is one of the names of Allah, or that we practice our litanies and remembrance of Allah using one of these names, then this is sufficient and without problem. The reason is that some scholars permit the use of weak narrations when it comes to virtuous acts.[376]

[375] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ defines a *ḥasan* Hadith as a tradition that has a chain of narrators who are known to be truthful and reliable, but where one of the narrators is of a lesser degree in terms of his memory of Hadith in comparison to the narrators of the *ṣaḥīḥ* Hadith. (*An Introduction to the Science of Hadith* [*al-Muqaddima*], p. 17)

[376] Imam al-Nawawī said in *al-Adhkār*: "The scholars amongst the experts in Hadith and the jurists, and others, have said that it is permissible and recommended to act upon weak Hadith when it comes to virtuous acts [*faḍā'il*], enjoining good and forbidding evil [*al-targhīb wal-tarhīb*], as long as they are not fabricated [*mawḍū'*]. Weak Hadith are not to be acted upon in rulings [*aḥkām*] regarding what is lawful [*ḥalāl*] and prohibited [*ḥarām*], trade [*buyū'*], marriage [*nikāḥ*], divorce [*ṭalāq*], and other than that; only sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*] and fair [*ḥasan*] Hadith [are to be acted upon in these matters], except as a matter of precaution. For example, if a weak

These names can either refer to the Essence, like the name 'Allah,' or to an attribute of the Essence, such as 'the All-Powerful' or 'the All-Knowing.' These names were never non-existent, and were not introduced by humans, but rather chosen by Allah ﷻ pre-eternally [*azalī*] before anything was created.

The names of Allah are, therefore, not contingent [*ḥādith*] but pre-eternal, and refer to the attributes of His Essence which establish the attributes of affirmation [*ṣifāt al-thubūtiyya*]. Names such as 'nature' or 'energy' can never be used for Allah ﷻ, as these names are neither divinely established nor can they refer to anything other than contingent things. All the names that the Qur'an and Sunna permit are those not alluding to anything derogatory. This means that all the permissible names allude to the glorification and praise of Allah.

### 39.2 *The various opinions on asserting a name or attribute —the meaning of which describes Allah* ﷻ

- Shaykh Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd said that even if the name or attribute points to pure perfection, *Ahl al-Sunna* hold the view that it is not permissible to ascribe it to Allah without an explicit permission.
- The *Mu'tazila* considered it permissible to assert a name or attribute—the meaning of which describes Allah—provided it does not suggest any imperfection. Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Baqillānī also considered it permissible.
- Imam al-Ḥaramayn remained silent and did not incline towards either group.
- Imam al-Ghazālī distinguished the name from the attribute. He considered it permissible to infer an attribute ■ the definite mode, such as pre-eternality [*qidam*]—since the attribute is what indicates a meaning in addition to the essence—and impermissible to use a name in the indefinite mode, as the name is what indicates the essence itself.

Hadith is cited regarding the reprehensibility [*karahāt*] of certain kinds of sales or marriages; in such cases, it is recommended [*mustahabb*] to avoid such sales and marriages, but not obligatory."
(Al-Nawawī, *Al-Adhkār*, p. 36)





Thus, the scholars differed only on one point, and that is when there is no explicit text from the Lawgiver that permits or prohibits the ascription of a certain name or attribute [to Him ﷻ] which, in addition, points to pure perfection.[177]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that a fifth position held is that of Ibn 'Arabī, which states that any name alluding to greatness [*ta'ẓīm*] is permissible, while any name alluding to deficiency is impermissible.[178]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that, ■ summary, any name that the Sacred Law permits to be used can be used, even if it may allude to a meaning unsuitable for Allah. Examples include the Patient [*al-Ṣabūr*], the Grateful [*al-Shakūr*], and the Clement [*al-Ḥalīm*]. These attributes may allude to Allah ﷻ experiencing some difficulty in that He needs to be grateful, patient, and so forth.

This is because patience [*ṣabr*], for example, requires ■ controlling of the self at the time one experiences some difficulty. The meaning of *al-Ṣabūr* with respect to Allah ﷻ, however, is that He is not hasty when it comes to punishing the disobedient.

*Al-Shakūr*, on the other hand, may give the impression that Allah is grateful for the abundance of good done in His name, because it implies an abundance of goodness for someone who displayed some goodness to Him. In reality, all goodness comes from Allah alone. *Al-Shakūr* is explained as the One Who repays a little obedience with high ranks; Who gives, for a limited amount of good deeds, graces in the life to come, which have no limit. It is also said that *al-Shakūr* is the One Who doubles the reward for those who obey Him.

### 39.3 *The names of the Prophet* ﷺ *are divinely established*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the names of the Prophet ﷺ are *tawqifiyya*, as agreed upon by all scholars. It is not permissible to call the Prophet ﷺ by a name that has not appeared in the Qur'an or Sunna, even though the name may allude to greatness.

[177] Shaykh Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, *Al-Niẓām al-Farīd bi-Taḥqīq Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (verse 39)
[178] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 39)

The difference is that the Prophet ﷺ is human [*bashar*] and—although he is also inherently infallible [*maṣūm*]—it is easier for one to ascribe or attribute a defect to him. Another reason for this is not to elevate the Prophet ﷺ to a status above Allah, like the Christians ascribing Divinity to the Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ. In confirmation, Imam al-Būṣīrī[379] said of this:

دَعْ مَا ادَّعَتْهُ النَّصَارَى فِي نَبِيِّهِمِ  وَاحْكُمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ مَدْحاً فِيهِ وَاحْتَكِمِ
فَمَبْلَغُ الْعِلْمِ فِيهِ أَنَّهُ بَشَرٌ  وَأَنَّهُ خَيْرُ خَلْقِ اللهِ كُلِّهِمِ

*Discard what the Christians may declare about their Prophet,*
*Then decide and proclaim what you wish in praise of him*
*For depth of knowledge concerning him, is that he is a man,*
*Verily, he is the best of all of Allah's creation*

Ibn al-Fāris said that the transmitted names of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ number two thousand and twenty. However, it was transmitted in *Sharḥ al-Minhāj* of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan [Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī] that it is in fact four thousand.[380]

## VERSE 40

وَكُلُّ نَصٍ أَوْهَمَ التَّشْبِيهَا  أَوِّلْهُ أَوْ فَوِّضْ وَرُمْ تَنْزِيهَا

*And every text that implies resemblance,*
*Interpret it or consign it, and seek its transcendence*

[379] He is Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Ḥammād al-Ṣunhājī al-Būṣīrī ؒ. He was of those who composed poetry in praise of the Prophet ﷺ. He is most famous for the *Qaṣīda al-Burda*. He was born in Egypt in 608 H. and was well known by his surname al-Būṣīrī from Bushire, to which one of his parents belonged. The exact year of his death is not known, but 695 H. is the most commonly given date.

[380] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 39)





وَكُلُّ نَصٍ أَوْهَمَ التَّشْبِيهَا

*And every text that implies resemblance*

### 40.1 *The unambiguous verses [muḥkamāt] and the ambiguous verses [mutashābihāt]*

Imam al-Suyūṭī explains that verses with meanings that are clear [*wāḍiḥa*] are referred to as *muḥkamāt*, while those that are unclear are referred to as *mutashābihāt*. *Muḥkam* refers to a verse that can be interpreted in only one way, while *mutashābih* is a verse that can be interpreted in more than one way.

A *muḥkam* verse, according to the *Shāfiʿī* jurist Imam al-Māwardī, can be rationally comprehended, whilst the *mutashābih* cannot. The latter includes the number of prayer cycles [*rakaʿāt*] in the daily prayers, or the choice of Ramadan as the month of fasting, as opposed to the month of Shaʿbān for example. A *muḥkam* verse can be understood by itself, whereas a *mutashābih* verse cannot be understood except by reference to other verses. Verses dealing with the attributes of Allah fall in the category of the *mutashābihāt*. Some of these include the following: ﴿*The most Merciful rose* [*istawā*] *over the throne...*﴾ [20:5] and: ﴿*Everything will perish except His face* [*wajh*],﴾ [28:88] and: ﴿*And the face of your Lord will remain,*﴾ [55:27] and: ﴿*In order that you may be brought up under My eye* [*ʿaynī*].﴾ [20:39] and: ﴿*The hand* [*yad*] *of Allah is above their hands.*﴾ [48:10][381]

أَوِّلْهُ

*Interpret it*

When it comes to understanding the attributes that seem to indicate a similitude between the Creator and the creation, *Ahl al-Sunna* apply either consigning [*tafwīḍ*] or interpretation [*taʾwīl*].

[381] Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾan* (p. 333)

### 40.2 *The lexical meaning of the word ta'wīl*

*Ta'wīl* is the verbal noun of the second form of the verb *āla* (to return) and has such meanings as 'causing to return,' 'go back,' or 'requite.' When used in reference to a word, it means 'taking it to its eventual meaning,' that is, to interpret or explain it.

### 40.3 *The technical meaning of interpretation [ta'wīl]*

Technically, it means to interpret the ambiguous verses [*mutashābihāt*] by affirming what Allah ﷻ has affirmed, negating what Allah has negated, and removing any similitude between the Creator and the creation. If any of the *mutashābihāt* from the Qur'an or Sunna, in their apparent sense, steer towards meanings that do not befit the majesty of Allah, or towards meanings that indicate resemblance between Allah and His creation, then this must be interpreted in other than such an apparent sense, with a meaning that is appropriate for His majesty.

Even though you may interpret Allah's 'hand' as His power [*qudra*], you must still intend and believe that Allah ﷻ is free from your limited understanding of His power, since human understanding is limited, and can never do justice to His Divine attributes.

أَوْ فَوِّضْ

*Or consign it*

### 40.4 *The meaning of consigning [tafwīḍ]*

The word 'or' [*aw*] in this verse indicates categorisation [*tanwī'*] and is used to indicate that different categories of *ta'wīl* exist according to the *Ash'arīs*. The second type of *ta'wīl* is referred to as *tafwīḍ*, which means to interpret the *mutashābihāt*, but in a general sense [*awwilu ijmālan*]. *Tafwīḍ* means affirming what Allah ﷻ has affirmed, and negating what He has negated. This includes negating any similitude between the Creator and the creation, and consigning the meaning and details of these verses to Allah alone.





### 40.5 *The way of the salaf regarding ta'wīl and tafwīḍ*

The predecessors [*salaf*] were those Muslims who lived during the first five centuries of Islam. It is also said that they are those who lived during the first three centuries of Islam. They include the Companions [*ṣaḥāba*], their followers [*tābi'ūn*], and the followers of their followers [*atbā' al-tābi'in*].

The *khalaf* were those Muslims who lived after the first five centuries of Islam. Some say that they were those Muslims who lived after the first three centuries. The way of the *khalaf* was to practice *ta'wīl*, thereby interpreting the *mutashābihāt*, and at the same time, exonerating Allah ﷻ from meanings that did not befit His majesty.

The way of the *salaf* was to practice *tafwīḍ*, that is, to consign the meanings to Allah, and not to interpret these verses, except to say that what Allah is referring to does not resemble the creation in any way.

The way of the *khalaf* is more precise [*aḥkam*] because it requires more explanation and the queries of our adversaries are better catered for. However, the way of the *salaf* is safer [*aslam*], because an interpreted meaning can be other than the originally intended meaning.[381]

Imam al-Suyūṭī said that most scholars, including the *salaf* and the scholars of Hadith, insist that we believe in these verses and consign their meaning and real intent to Allah ﷻ, without attempting to explain or interpret them. Nonetheless, we must declare Allah transcendent above the literal application of their meanings. Declaring Allah transcendent above any lowly characteristics is referred to as *tanzīh*, which is necessary when practicing either *tafwīḍ* or *ta'wīl*.

It has been related that Imam al-Shāfi'ī was of those who trod the path of the *salaf* in avoiding any interpretation of the verses and narrations pertaining to the Divine attributes. He practiced *tafwīḍ*, as established in his saying: "I leave the meaning of the verses of the attributes to Allah ﷻ, and I leave the meaning of the Hadith on the attributes to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."

[381] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 40)

There are, nevertheless, some narrations indicating that Imam al-Shāfi'ī practiced *ta'wīl* with regard to the *mutashābihāt*. He said that *ta'wīl* was practiced only when the need arose, by only a few of the *salaf* and by many of the *khalaf*. Therefore, we say that the way [*madhhab*] of the *khalaf* was that of *ta'wīl*, while the *madhhab* of the *salaf* was that of *tafwīḍ*."[183]

In summary, *Ahl al-Sunna* are upon two ways regarding the *mutashābihāt*: *ta'wīl* and *tafwīḍ*. The *Mu'tazila*, on the other hand, insisted that *ta'wīl* be practiced and *tafwīḍ* rejected.

## وَرُمْ تَنْزِيهَا

### *And seek its transcendence*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said this means that when interpreting the *mutashābihāt*, we must believe and intend to declare Allah transcendent above anything lowly and inappropriate. The way of the *salaf* was to declare Him transcendent above any impossible meaning [*ma nā muḥāl*]. They also consigned [*yufawwiḍūna*] the reality of specifying exactly what is attributed to Allah, to Allah alone, while believing [*i'tiqād*] that these verses are from Allah ﷻ, which the Prophet ﷺ came with.

It is clear that the *salaf* and the *khalaf* were in agreement [*ittifāq*] regarding declaring Allah transcendent [*tanzīh*] above any meaning that is inappropriate for Him, and upon the belief that all of these verses are from Allah, revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The differences of opinion between the *salaf* and the *khalaf* are only regarding whether or not one can specify one correct meaning to the *mutashābihāt* or not. The proof that one should stay clear from interpreting these verses is the stopping point [*waqf*] in the following verse, which refers to the *mutashābihāt*, in *Sūra Āl 'Imrān*: ﴿*But no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge, say: "We believe in it..."*﴾ [3:7] This is the *madhhab* of the *salaf*.

[183] Ibn Qudāma, *Dhamm al Ta'wīl*





The *madhhab* of the *khalaf*, on the other hand, is to read the verse without stopping [to begin a new sentence]: ﴿*But no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. Say: "We believe in it..."*﴾[184]

Further proof that some people share in the understanding of the ambiguous verses [*mutashābihāt*] is that the Prophet ﷺ would often draw 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās ؓ, when he was a child, close to him, pat him on the shoulder, and pray: "O Lord, make him acquire a deep understanding of the religion of Islam and instruct him in the meaning and interpretation of things."

### 40.6 *How the predecessors [salaf] and later generations [khalaf] approached the mutashābihāt*

Imam al-Bājūrī said regarding the verse: ﴿*They fear their Lord above them...*﴾ [16:50] that he *salaf* said that the meaning of 'aboveness' [*fawqiyya*] is unknown to us, while the *khalaf* interpreted it as 'exaltedness' [*'aẓamiyya*]. The *khalaf* understood ﴿*They fear*﴾ in this verse as the fear of the angels due to Allah's superiority in exaltedness.

Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*The most Merciful rose [istawā] over the throne...*﴾ [20:5] The *salaf* said that the meaning of *istiwā* is unknown, while the *khalaf* interpreted it as conquering [*istīlā*] and sovereignty [*mulk*].

When Imam Mālik ؒ was asked about this verse, he lowered his head and was silent until the sweat of fever covered his brow, then said:

> *Istiwā'* is not unknown [*ghayr majhūl*], the 'how' [*kayf*] of it is inconceivable [*ghayr mu'qūl*]; but faith [*īmān*] in it is obligatory [*wājib*], and inquiring [*su'āl*] about it is a heretical innovation [*bid'a*]. I fear that you are lost!

Then, he ordered the questioner to be removed from his gathering.

[184] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 40)

Al-Zamakhsharī once asked Imam al-Ghazālī about *istiwā'* and he replied:

> If it is impossible for you to know about the 'howness' [*kayfiyya*] and 'whereness' [*ayniyya*] of your own self, then it is not befitting for a servant to ascribe to the Lord 'where' and 'how,' since He is Exalted above these (notions).

In a Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah created Adam in His image [*ṣūra*]."[385] The *salaf* said that the meaning of *ṣūra* is unknown while the *khalaf* interpreted it to mean 'attribute' [*ṣifa*]. This means that Allah ﷻ created Adam ﷺ according to His attributes of sight, hearing, knowledge, and life. The critical difference and the salient point is that the attributes of human beings are contingent and not pre-eternal.

As for the words 'face,' 'hand,' 'finger,' and the like, as in: ﴿*And the face of your Lord will remain...*﴾ [55:27] and: ﴿*Allah's hand is above their hands...*﴾ [48:10] and the Hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, the hearts of children of Adam, all of them, are like one heart between two fingers of the fingers [*aṣābi'*] of the most Merciful;"[386] the *salaf* said that the knowledge of Allah's face, [*wajh*], hand [*yad*] and fingers [*aṣābi'*] is unknown.[387]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the *khalaf* interpreted 'face' to mean 'Essence' [*Dhāt*], and 'hand' and 'fingers' to mean 'power' [*qudra*].

## VERSE 41

وَنَزِّهِ الْقُرْآنَ أَيْ كَلَامَهُ عَنِ الْحُلُوثِ وَاحْذَرِ انْتِقَامَهُ

*And declare the Qur'an transcendent, meaning His speech,*
*Above contingency, and beware of Allah's punishment*

[385] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2612), narrated by Abū Hurayra ﷺ
[386] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2655), narrated by 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. al-'Āṣ ﷺ
[387] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 40)





وَنَزِّهِ الْقُرْآنَ

*And declare the Qur'an transcendent*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the purpose [*maqṣūd*] of mentioning this issue is to refute the *Mu'tazila*, who negated the attribute of speech [*kalām*] when they said: "Verily, speech carries the necessities [*lawāzim*] of letters [*ḥurūf*] and sounds [*aṣwāt*], and this is impossible for Allah." Imam al-Laqānī refuted them by saying: "*And declare the Qur'an transcendent.*"[388]

Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks said that the question at the root of the *Mu'tazila* and Sunni controversy in the third century was: if we say that the Qur'an is the speech of Allah, do we mean the actual written words and letters of the Qur'an [*kalām lafẓī*], or only the meanings conveyed by them [*kalām nafsī*], or both?

*Mu'tazilī* scholars, whilst affirming that speech is an attribute of Allah, deny that it is a pre-eternal attribute. In their view, the speech of Allah can only refer to the words and the letters of the Qur'an, which Allah ﷻ created in the preserved tablet [*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*] through the angel Jibrīl ﷺ. The position of the *Mu'tazila* is thus that speech is indeed an attribute of Allah. However, speech is no more than the words and letters that He creates in the preserved tablet; therefore, it not a pre-eternal attribute of Allah.

### 41.1 *Self-speech* [*kalām nafsī*] *and verbal speech* [*kalām lafẓī*]

The response of *Ahl al-Sunna* to the view of the *Mu'tazila* is that the word *kalām* can indeed be used to mean 'words,' but this is called verbal speech [*kalām lafẓī*]. *Kalām nafsī* is a pre-eternal attribute of the Essence. It is the meaning conveyed by the Qur'an. The words and sounds of the Qur'an are certainly created by Allah, but its meanings are doubtlessly the pre-eternal speech of Allah, which is a necessary and pre-eternal attribute of the Essence.[389]

[388] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 41)
[389] *The Book of Divine Unity*, Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks

### 41.2 *Some of the trials the scholars of Ahl al-Sunna experienced for believing that the Qur'an is not created*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that Imam al-Bukhārī would retreat when this question was raised, and supplicate: "O Lord, seize my soul before [this] strife [*fitna*] overtakes me." Four days later, he passed away. ʿĪsā b. Dīnār, who was of the most pious scholars of his time, was jailed for twenty years because of his refusal to entertain this question. Al-Shaʿbī, when asked about it, said: "As for the *Tawrāt*, *Injīl*, *Zabūr*, and *Furqān*, these four are contingent [*ḥādith*], all the while pointing to his (four) fingers. This was the reason for his salvation [from persecution]. Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, however, was jailed and lashed until he was unconscious, because of his refusal to give in. It was related that Imam al-Shāfiʿī was visited by the Prophet ﷺ in his dream, who told him to "convey the glad tidings of Paradise to Aḥmad [*bashar Aḥmad bil-janna*] upon the calamity that has befallen him [*balwā tuṣībuhu*] regarding the [notion of the] Qur'an being created." Imam al-Shāfiʿī then wrote to him in Baghdad. When Imam Aḥmad received the letter, he began to cry. He then sent his shirt to Imam al-Shāfiʿī with his messenger, to thank him. When the messenger reached Egypt and Imam al-Shāfiʿī came to know that Imam Aḥmad had given his shirt, he said: "Moisten the shirt ■ water and give it to me so that I can gain blessings from it." It is also narrated that he drank the water in which the shirt was moistened.[390]

### 41.3 *Imam Aḥmad's trial at the hands of al-Maʿmūn*

Al-Maʿmūn[391] believed in the *Muʿtazilī* doctrine and sought to impose it upon everyone in his empire—including the scholars. While many scholars pretended to subscribe to the *Muʿtazili* doctrine in order to avoid persecution, Imam Aḥmad refused to compromise.

Al-Maʿmūn instituted an inquisition known as the *Miḥna*. Any scholar who refused to accept the *Muʿtazilī* doctrine was severely persecuted and punished.

[390] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 41)

[391] Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbdullah al-Maʿmūn b. Hārūn was an ʿAbbasid caliph in the second century after *hijra*.





Imam Aḥmad, ■ the most prominent scholar of Baghdad, was brought before al-Maʿmūn and ordered to abandon his belief that the Qur'an was the pre-eternal and uncreated Word of Allah.

When he refused, he was tortured and imprisoned. His treatment at the hands of the rulers was extremely severe. People who witnessed the torture commented that even an elephant could not have bared the horrific treatment to which he was subjected.

Despite this, Imam Aḥmad held to his beliefs and served as an inspiration for Muslims throughout the empire. His trials set the precedent that Muslims do not give up their beliefs, regardless of what the ruler imposes.

In the end, Imam Aḥmad outlived al-Maʿmūn and his successors until the caliph al-Mutawakkil ascended and ended the *Miḥna*. Imam Aḥmad was once again free to teach the people of Baghdad and to write. During this time, he wrote his famous *Musnad*, a collection of Hadith that served as the basis of his school of law, the *Ḥanbalī madhhab*.

### 41.4 *The Prophet ﷺ is better than kalām lafẓī*

Imam al-Bājūrī asked the question: is the Qur'an, when referring to the letters and sounds that are recited, better [*afḍal*], or is the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ better?

Some scholars have said that every letter is better than the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Family. However, the truth is that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is better. This is because the Prophet ﷺ is the best of creation [*afḍal min kulli makhlūq*].

This opinion is strengthened by the words of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī in his commentary on the Burda: "It (the recited Qur'an) is the action of a reader, and the Prophet ﷺ is better than any reader and all of his actions."

The safest option is to remain silent on this issue and issues like it, since there is no harm in abstaining.[392]

[392] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 41)

أَيْ كَلَامَهُ

*Meaning, His speech*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that 'speech' [*kalām*] in this verse means 'Qur'an,' and the meaning of Qur'an here is the pre-eternal speech of Allah, which has no beginning and no ending and subsists in His Essence [*qā'im bi-Dhātihi*].[393]

This means that Imam al-Laqānī intended the 'meanings' and not the 'written words.' In summary, the meanings are uncreated, while the written words and sounds are created.

عَنِ الْحُدُوثِ وَاحْذَرِ انْتِقَامَهُ

*Above contingency, and beware of Allah's vengeance*

In summary, Shaykh Mahdī said that it is necessary for the *mukallaf* to declare the Qur'an—that is, *kalām nafsī*—transcender above contingency [*ḥudūth*]. This means that the speech of Allah ﷻ is not created, and does not exist within the creation, but is rather an attribute of His Exalted Essence [*ṣifāt al-Dhāt*]. It is impossible for something that is contingent to subsist in Allah ﷻ. The punishment for saying that the Qur'an is created is severe, and we should refrain from doing so.[394]

## VERSE 42

وَكُلُّ نَصٍ لِلْحُدُوثِ دَلاَّ  إِحْمِلْ عَلَى اللَّفْظِ الَّذِي قَدْ دَلاَّ

*And every text alluding to contingency,*
*Carry it upon the expression that it alludes to*

[393] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 41)

[394] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdī Hendricks)





وَكُلُّ نَصٍ لِلْحُدُوثِ دَلاَّ

*And every text alluding to contingency*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *kullu naṣṣ* refers to all that is apparent from the texts of the Qur'an or Hadith. Imam al-Laqānī says that every text [*naṣṣ*] alluding to contingency [*dallan lil-ḥudūth*] must be interpreted accordingly.

Some of these verses include: ﴿*Verily, We have revealed it in the Night of Decree* [*layla al-qadr*].﴾ [97:1] and: ﴿*Verily, we have sent down the message,*﴾ [15:9] and: ﴿*All praise is due to Allah, Who hath sent to His servant the Book.*﴾ [18:1]

إِحْمِلْ عَلَى اللَّفْظِ الَّذِي قَدْ دَلاَّ

*Carry it upon the expression that it alludes to*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that every text [*naṣṣ*] which alludes to contingency [*yūhim al-ḥudūth*] is understood by *Ahl al-Sunna* to be the contingent word [*lafẓ al-ḥādith*] which indicates or carries 'some' of the meanings of the pre-eternal attribute of speech [*al-kalām al-qadīm*].[395]

### 42.1 The various opinions regarding the speech of Allah

- Know that the relied upon opinion [*mu'tamad*] is that the Divine attribute of speech is without letters or sounds.

[395] According to the *Ash'aris*, all Qur'anic or Hadith references to contingencies in the Qur'an must be interpreted as *kalām lafẓī*. Thus, we say that it is *kalām lafẓī* that came down, was collected, is interpreted, is the miracle, and so forth.

- A group that ascribed themselves to the Ḥanbalīs held the view that it is pre-eternal but with letters and sounds. When attributed to Allah it is pre-eternal [*qadīm*] and when attributed to the creation it is contingent [*ḥādith*]. "The falsehood of this is plain to see."[396]
- The anthropomorphists [*Mujassima*], those who ascribe human qualities to Allah, said that the Divine speech is composed of created letters and sounds that subsist in the Divine Essence and are the result of His Divine will and power. Thus, Allah ﷻ originates them in His Essence before which they previously did not exist. Individually, each word is *ḥādith*, and collectively they are *qadīm*. This is because Allah speaks when He wills and His will is pre-eternal. This proves that the individual words of His speech are created, and ■ a whole, it is pre-eternal. This is in reality a summary of the view held by Ibn Taymiyya.

Ibn Taymiyya reached his conclusion by drawing up comparisons between the creation and the Creator.[397] Because speech in the world is composed of letters and sounds, he understood this must mean that Allah's speech is also composed of letters and sounds.

This view is rejected by *Ahl al-Sunna*.

### 42.2 *Some of the meanings indicated by kalām lafẓī*

We mentioned that the letters and words we have before us indicate some of the meanings of Allah's pre-eternal speech. These letters are arranged and created and cannot be the actual speech, because the contingent cannot subsist in the pre-eternal.

[396] *Ḥāshiya al-Bājūrī ʿalā Umm al-Barāhīn*; cf. Shaykh Saʿīd Foudah, *A Refined Explanation of the Sanusi Creed* (p. 93)

[397] For a comprehensive analysis and refutation of Ibn Taymiyya's theology of resemblance [*tashbīh*], see: *A Critique of the Palmyran Creed* by Shaykh Saʿīd Foudah.





We therefore say that the words revealed to the Prophet ﷺ are called the speech of Allah because they indicate towards some of the meanings of the pre-eternal speech of Allah ﷻ [*kalām nafsī*], which indicates all that is necessary, possible, and impossible.

As for the revealed, verbal speech [*kalām lafẓī*], it indicates only *some* of these meanings. In other words, the heavenly scriptures revealed indicate neither all of the knowledge nor all the meanings of the pre-eternal speech.

An example of the revealed speech indicating some of the necessary [*wājib*] is: ﴿*Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally Besought of all!*﴾ [112:1-2]

An example of the revealed speech indicating some of what is permissible [*jāʾiz*] is: ﴿*And your Lord creates whatsoever He wills and chooses...*﴾ [28:68]

An example of the revealed speech indicating some of what is impossible [*mustaḥīl*] is: ﴿*Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allah, then verily, both would have been ruined.*﴾ [21:22]

This connection [*taʿalluq*], i.e., what the words indicate towards, is called pre-eternal effectiveness [*tanjīzī qadīm*].

These subtle points are best mentioned in the appropriate places of learning with the aim of dispelling the notion that the letters arranged in the Books, which were revealed to the Prophets ﷺ, are pre-eternal without beginning.

### 42.3 *The Qurʾan is the speech of Allah*

The Qurʾan is defined as the words revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, the shortest (word) of which is a miracle that no person is capable of replicating, the recitation [*tilāwa*] of which is a type of worship [*muʿabbad*], revealed by Allah in word [*lafẓ*] and meaning [*maʿnā*], and this is the correct view [*ʿalā al-ṣawāb*].

This is contrary to the view held by those who said that the meanings were revealed to the angel Jibrīl ﷺ and that the words were formulated by him.

It is also contrary to the view held by those who said that the angel Jibrīl ﷺ revealed the meanings to the heart of the Prophet while the words were formulated by the Prophet ﷺ himself.

These views oppose the correct view [*khilāf al-ṣawāb*].[398]

Taken literally, the verses cited earlier [97:1; 15:9; 18:1] may imply that the Qur'an did not previously exist, and that it was brought into existence after a certain period of time. *Ahl al-Sunna* believe that the Qur'an carries some of the meanings of the pre-eternal speech. The words that point to the meanings are contingent [*ḥādith*] and referred to as *kalām lafẓī*, while that which they point to is pre-eternal [*qadīm*] and referred to as *kalām nafsi*.

The *Ash'arī* view, in summary, is that the word 'Qur'an' and the word 'speech' [*kalām*] are shared [*mushtarak*] between both types of Divine speech. It is therefore understood in the literal sense [*haqīqatan*] ■ referring to both the words revealed [*munazzal*] which we recite—*kalām lafẓī*—and the pre-eternal attribute of speech which subsists in the Essence of Allah ﷻ—*kalām nafsi*.

Another opinion states that the word 'Qur'an' is used only to refer to the words recited in the literal sense [*ḥaqīqatan*], and to the pre-eternal attribute of speech in the metaphorical sense [*majāz*]; while the word *kalām* is used in the opposite way [*'aks*], where the pre-eternal attribute of speech is intended literally, and the words recited are intended metaphorically.[399]

The reason for all these technical rulings mentioned is because there is a relationship of necessity between the speech of Allah and its earthly manifestation in the form of the written, recited Qur'an. Speaking about one aspect is as like speaking about the other aspect. However, we cannot confuse between the two.[400]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that these intricacies should only be discussed in theological circles, and not in public gatherings.[401]

[398] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 42)
[399] Ibid.
[400] Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks, *The Book of Divine Unity*
[401] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 42)



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## VERSE 43

وَيَسْتَحِيلُ ضِدُّ ذِي الصِّفَات  فِي حَقِّهِ كَالْكَوْنِ فِي الْجِهَاتِ

*And impossible is the opposite of these attributes,*
*Such as Him being in any direction*

وَيَسْتَحِيلُ ضِدُّ ذِي الصِّفَات

*And impossible is the opposite of these attributes*

### 43.1 *What is impossible for Allah*

The twenty attributes [*ṣifāt*] dealt with previously were those necessary [*wājib*] for Allah ﷻ. It is necessary according to the Sacred Law [*sharī'a*] to believe that the opposites of these twenty attributes are impossible [*mustaḥīl*] for Allah ﷻ.

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that this is the third category of the rational judgements [*ḥukm 'aqlī*] previously mentioned by Imam al-Laqānī in verses 9 and 10, where he said: "*And for every accountable person it is a legal obligation, for him to know what is necessary, For Allah, the permissible and the impossible...*"

The noble author made mention of the category pertaining to the permissible [*jā'iz*] first, whilst delaying its details [*tafṣīl*] until the end due to it being the lengthiest in discussion [*ṭūl al-kalām*].

The *al* in the word *al-ṣifāt* indicates *'ahd al-dhikrī*[402] and refers to all the Divine attributes previously mentioned collectively [*ṣifāt bi-asrihā*], including the self-signifying attribute [*ṣifa nafsiyya*], the attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*], the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*], and the attributes pertaining to meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyya*].[403]

[402] There are several types of *al-* in the Arabic language. Generally, it indicates something definite like the boy [*al-walad*] or the book [*al-kitāb*]. *'Ahd al-dhikrī* refers to something previously known to the speaker and the audience.
[403] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 43)

Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks said that it is impossible for Allah to be or become non-existent [*'adam*], to be contingent [*ḥudūth*], or that He ﷻ is like the creation [*mumāthala lil-ḥawādith*] in any and all of its forms [*anwā'*]. Thus, He ﷻ is neither a body [*jism*] occupying space, nor an accident [*'araḍ*] subsisting in a body, such as the colour white or black.

It is impossible for Him ﷻ to be a body, occupying space. In contrast to this is the view of the *Mujassima*, who said that Allah has a body that is different from the bodies of contingent things, and only He knows how the body is. Their doctrine is based on [literally interpreting] verses from the Qur'an where Allah refers to His 'face,' 'hand,' 'fingers,' and so forth. The condition [*sharṭ*] which they omit is to qualify these verses with the verse: ﴿*And there is nothing like unto Him.*﴾ [42:11]

If they do not qualify these verses as stated, then they fall into disbelief [*kufr*]. If they qualify them, then they do not fall into *kufr*, but are considered innovators [*mubtadi'īn*].

Likewise, *Ahl al-Sunna* do not accuse the *Mu'tazila* of *kufr* on account of their belief that man creates his own actions. The *Ash'arīs* mention the verse ﴿*Allah created you and what you do*﴾ [37:96] as proof that Allah creates us and our actions, and they interpret accordingly the verses implying that human beings are the creators of their own actions. Since the *Mu'tazila* have some textual proofs for their belief, they are not declared disbelievers but rather innovators.[404]

Imam 'Abd al-Salām said that it is impossible that He ﷻ be an accident subsisting in a body, such ■ the colour white or black, or a dimension, such as height or width. It is also impossible that He exists on a body, or next to a body, that He be connected to time and place, or that His Exalted Essence be attributed with contingent things.

It is impossible that He be attributed with size, such as tallness or shortness, or that it can be construed that He has a purpose that He must achieve through His creation and His rulings [*aḥkām*], or that there is a derived benefit that would motivate Him to create in order to achieve that benefit. This, however,

[404] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





does not negate the fact that He created creation with wisdom and as a benefit to mankind. He, therefore, did not create in vain. Our worshipping of Him and obedience to His laws are not ■ benefit to Allah; rather, in it is a deep wisdom for mankind.

It is impossible that He is does not subsist by His Essence [*qā'im bi-Dhātihī*]. If this would not be so, then He would be an attribute [*ṣifa*] that exists in an essence [*maḥall*], and this would mean that He is continent.

It is impossible that He is not 'One,' that He is compound [*murakkab*], i.e., that He consists of parts, that anything is like [*mumāthil*] unto Him and His *ṣifāt*, or that with Him there is another cause for the actions of the creation.

It is impossible that He is incapable [*'ājiz*] of creating any possible thing, that He does something against His will [*irāda*] but does not approve of it, that He does not know about it or is unaware of it, or that He created something by mistake.

It is impossible that He creates something out of necessity, or that everything happens out of necessity through ■ chain reaction of cause and effect without the will and power of Allah being required. Allah is the Causer of causes [*musabbib al-asbāb*]. He is the One who brings about the cause leading to an effect, through His will and His power

It is impossible that things happen naturally [by themselves], that He has ignorance [*jahl*] of them, that He experiences death [*mawt*], that He is deaf or blind, or that He is in a direction [*jiha*]. All of these are impossible for Allah because they are defects and because He is above and unlike created things.[405]

فِي حَقِّهِ كَالْكَوْنِ فِي الْجِهَاتِ

*Such ■ Him being in any direction*

The noble author mentions that among the impossibilities for Allah is to have a direction [*jiha*], because placing something in a direction implies that it must be a body occupying time and space.

[405] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that being in a direction is an example of one of the impossibilities for Allah ﷻ. When we say 'impossible for Him is direction,' we are referring to the six directions, namely: above [*fawq*], below [*taḥt*], in front [*amām*], behind [*khalf*], right [*yamīn*], and left [*shimāl*]. This means that it is necessary for us to [metaphorically] interpret verses which apparently indicate that He ﷻ is in a direction, such as: ﴿*The most Merciful rose* [*istawā*] *over the throne...*﴾ [20:5]

This is because *istiwā'* has many meanings, including control, overpowering, and subduing, ■ the poet says:

قد استوى بشر على العراق  من غير سيف ودم مهراق

*Bishr has subdued and overpowered Iraq,*
*Without using the sword or bloodshed*

Ibn 'Aṭā'illah said at the end of his Ḥikam:

يا من استوى برحمانيته على عرشه

فصار العرش غيباً في رحمانيته

كما صارت العوالم غيباً في عرشه

*O the One Who rose with mercifulness over His throne,*
*So that the throne becomes hidden in His mercifulness,*
*Just as the worlds are hidden in His throne*

He indicates here that the throne, even though it is the largest creation [*akbaru makhlūqāt*], is hidden so that it cannot be seen. It is small in comparison to the mercy of Allah, and therefore became hidden within that mercy just like the creation became hidden within His throne. This is indicated by the verse: ﴿*My mercy encompasses all things.*﴾ [7:156]

Al-Zamakhshari asked Imam al-Ghazālī about this verse [as well], and he replied [in the same fashion]:





If it is impossible for you to know about the 'howness' [*kayfiyya*] and 'whereness' [*ayniyya*] of your own self, then it is not befitting for ■ servant to ascribe to the Lord 'where' and 'how,' since He is Exalted above these (notions).[406]

## VERSE 44

وَجَائِزٌ فِي حَقِّهِ مَا أَمْكَنَا  إِيجَاداً إِعْدَاماً كَرَزْقِهِ الغِنَى

*And permissible for Him is all that is possible,*
*Bringing into existence and removing from it,*
*such as giving sustenance to the wealthy*

### 44.1 *What is possible for Allah*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that after the noble author completed the categories dealing with the necessary [*wājib*] and the impossible [*mustaḥīl*], he commenced with the third category, namely that which is possible or permissible [*jā'iz*] for Allah.

The words '*al that is possible*' [*mā amkanā*] refer to 'all possible things' [*jamī' al-mumkināt*], while the intended meaning is: 'all possible things connected to His power [*qudra*] and will [*irāda*], be it good [*khayr*] or bad [*sharr*], sweet [*ḥulw*] or bitter [*murr*].'

وَجَائِزٌ فِي حَقِّهِ مَا أَمْكَنَا

*And permissible for Him is all that is possible*

The words *jā'iz* and *mumkin* are synonyms, meaning 'permissible' or 'possible.' It is as if the noble author is saying: 'And permissible [*jā'iz*] for Allah is all that is permissible [*jāza*].' This may cause the line to appear somewhat prosaic and redundant to the reader.

[406] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 43)

With this generalization [*'umūm*], the noble author intended to refute the *Mu'tazila*. It is as if he is saying: 'And permissible for Him ﷻ is all that is possible [*kullu mumkināt*], be it good [*khayr*] or bad [*sharr*], sweet [*ḥulw*] or bitter [*murr*].'

This is because of the saying of the *Mu'tazila*: "Everything that is permissible to emanate from Allah is not necessarily possible for Him. Thus, what is bad [*shurūr*] and evil [*qabā'iḥ*] are impossible for Him ﷻ, and likewise, that He never veers from what is good [*ṣalāḥ*] and what is better [*aṣlaḥ*] is obligatory [*wājib*] upon Him."[407]

The noble author refuted them with this general statement [*'ibāra 'āmma*], which will be elaborated upon in the next verse: "*He creates the servant and his actions...*" and in verse 51: "*And their saying, that which is good is obligatory upon Him...*"

إِيجَاداً إِعْدَاماً كَرَزْقِهِ الغِنَى

*Bringing into existence and removing from it,*
*such as giving sustenance to the wealthy*

The word *razq* with a *fatḥa* on the letter *rā'* in the construction *razqihi* is an infinitive [*maṣdar*] attached to the actor [*fā'il*], meaning: 'like the sustenance of Allah upon His servant thereby making him wealthy.' This is an example of his saying '*bringing into existence* [*ījādan*].'

[407] The *Mu'tazila* believed that if two options arose, one good and the other bad, then it is obligatory [*wājib*] upon Allah to create that what is good. On the other hand, if one option is better [*aṣlaḥ*] and the other good [*ṣalāḥ*], then it is obligatory upon Allah to create that what is better. They held the view that corruption [*fasād*] and goodness [*ṣalāḥ*] emanated purely from the servant and that Allah's will is not involved in it. Thus did they negate the attributes of meaning [*ṣifāt al-ma'ānī*] in their entirety. Their reasoning was that 'will' is from the attributes of negation [*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*], not permitting anything lowly or negative to emanate from Allah. *Ahl al-Sunna*, on the other hand, hold the belief that Allah cannot be forced and that nothing of what is possible is obligatory [*wājib*] for Him, but that "*permissible for Him is all that is possible*," as the noble author clarified.





An example of his saying '*removing from it* [*i.e., from existence*] [*i'dām*]' would be Allah withholding the sustenance from the servant, thereby preventing him from becoming wealthy.

Thus, good and evil are from Allah; however, it is good etiquette [*adab*] to ascribe what is good to Allah and evil to oneself. Allah says: ﴿*What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil is from yourself.*﴾ [4:79]

This is because we acquire things (through our actions and intentions). This is best explained in the verse: ﴿*Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have acquired...*﴾ [42:30]

As for the saying of Allah: ﴿*Say, "everything comes from Allah,"*﴾ [4:78] this indicates the reality of things.

Observe the etiquette of our master [Sayyidunā] Khiḍr ﷺ when he said: ﴿"*Your Lord wished thus, that they should attain their age of maturity,*"﴾ [18:82] and his saying: ﴿"*...And I desired to damage it.*"﴾ [18:79][408]

Likewise, the sayings of our master Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl ﷺ: ﴿"(*It is He*) *Who created me and it is He Who guides me, He who gives me food and drink, and when I am ill it is He Who cures me.*"﴾ [26:78-80]

He ﷺ ascribed the guidance [*hidāya*], the feeding [*iṭ'ām*], and the healing [*shifā*] to Allah, and he ascribed the sickness [*imrāḍ*] to himself. This he ﷺ did out of sheer etiquette [*adab*], for in reality everything is from Allah ﷻ.

VERSE 45

فَخَالِقٌ لِعَبْدِهِ وَمَا عَمِلْ  مُوَفِّقٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَصِلْ

*He creates the servant and his actions,*
*Granting enabling grace to the one He wills to arrive*

[408] Khiḍr ﷺ ascribed attaining ﴿*their age of maturity*﴾ to Allah, and he ascribed the ﴿*damage*﴾ caused to himself.

فَخَالِقٌ لِعَبْدِهِ

*He creates the servant*

**45.1** *Allah is the Creator of everything*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that since good [*khayr*] and bad [*sharr*] are in reality from Allah, He ﷻ is the Creator of His servant. The intended meaning of "*He creates the servant*" is in fact 'all of creation."[409]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that this is in accordance with Allah's statement: ﴿*Allah creates you and what you do.*﴾ [37:96]

وَمَا عَمِلَ

*And his actions*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that this means that Allah creates all of the servant's deeds and actions, including his good deeds, bad deeds, voluntary actions [*ikhtiyāran*] and involuntary actions [*iḍṭirāran*]. The servant has nothing except pure inclination [*mujarrad al-mayl*] during his state of choosing [*ḥāla al-ikhtiyār*].

For this reason, the servant is urged to repent [*ṭuliba bil-tawba*], leave off sin [*iqlā'*] and to feel remorse [*nadm*]; otherwise, he would rightfully deserve rebuke [*ta'zīr*] and punishment [*ḥudūd*]. Reward [*thawāb*] and punishment [*'iqāb*] are therefore due to acquisition [*kasb*], which will be discussed shortly. This is in contrast to the view of the *Mu'tazila* who believed that the servant creates his own actions through choice.

The response to the *Mu'tazila* consists of the following three arguments:

1. If the action is created by the power [*qudra*] of Allah and the *qudra* of the servant ['*abd*], this necessitates the combining of two factors causing an impact on one action [*mu'athirayn 'alā atharin wāḥid*].

[409] *Sharh al-Ṣāwī* (verse 45)





2. If the servant ['*abd*] solely creates the action solely [*faqaṭ*] by his own power [*qudra*], this necessitates that things occur in the world that go against the will of Allah. This, in turn, necessitates that He ﷻ not be the sole Creator of all things [*wāḥid fī al-af'āl*], and the belief that He ﷻ has a partner in actions is disbelief [*kufr*].
3. This is further weakened by the fact that if the servant created his own actions, then he would be knowledgeable ['*ālim*] of them. He would know them intimately, be it in moments of stillness [*sakanāt*] or moments of movement [*ḥarakāt*], all through the day and for all days. The ignorance [*jahl*] of this is proof [*dalīl*] of the servant's incapacity ['*ajz*] to create his own actions.

As for the saying of the *Mu'tazila* that 'these sayings (of *Ahl al-Sunna*) necessitate that if it is Allah Who creates all things, good and bad, and He punishes the sinner for transgressing, then it is oppression [*ẓulm*] on His behalf,' it is rejected since *ẓulm* means to curtail or unjustly remove the property of another.

It was narrated that Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad, the Mu'tazilī and judge of Qazwīn, met with Ismā'īl b. 'Abbād, a minister [*wazīr*] of the Maghreb. During this meeting, he saw Ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī, the Imam of *Ahl al-Sunna*, and said to him: "Glory be to the One who is high above abomination [*faḥishā'*]." Knowing full well the intent of Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, Ustādh al-Isfarāyīnī replied: "Glory be to the One in Whose dominion nothing happens except what He wills [*yurīd*]." Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār responded: "Do you mean that your Lord wants to be disobeyed [*yu'sā*]?" Ustādh al-Isfarāyīnī replied: "Is our Lord disobeyed against His will [*qahran*]?" 'Abd al-Jabbār responded once again: "In your opinion, if He prevented guidance [*hudā*] for me, but rather decreed ruin [*radī*] for me, is this better or worse for me?" Al-Isfarāyīnī replied: "If He prevented you from what you own, then He has done wrong by you, but if He prevented you from what belongs to Him, then the King [*Mālik*] has done in His dominion [*mulk*] exactly what He wishes [*mā yashā'*]." Those present departed and said: "There is no answer after this; by Allah, it was as if 'Abd al-Jabbār swallowed a stone."

According to the Gnostics [*'ārifīn*], this is called *waḥda al-afāl*. It means that the *'ārif* witnesses no act except that of Allah. This is also referred to ■ *tawḥīd al-afāl*, which means that He ﷻ acts alone. One of the *'ārifīn*[410] has said:

ولي في خيال الظل أكبر عبرة ... لمن هو في علم الحقيقة راقي

وتفنى جميعا والمهيمن باقي ... شخوص وأشكال تمر فتنقضي

*And for me, in the imagining of shadows is the starkest lesson,*
*For the one immersed in the ocean of reality observes clearly*
*Distinct figures and shapes come and go,*
*All vanish, while the One who caused them to move remains*

Some of the *'ārifīn* have also said:

وما الخلق في التمثال إلا كثلجةٍ ... لها صورة لكن تبدت عن الماءِ

فلو الكشف لم يشهد سوى الماء وحده ... تبدى بوصف الثلج من غير إخفاء

ومن حجبته صورة الثلج جاهل ... تغطى عليه الأمر من لمع أضواء

*And the creation is likened to nothing but ice,*
*They have form but originate from water*
*So those of inner sight see nothing save the water,*
*Its origin, although described as ice, is not hidden*
*And he who was veiled by the form of ice remains ignorant,*
*The affair is concealed from him, (so that he misses) the radiance of light*

[410] In his footnotes on Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī's commentary (p. 232), Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Bizm mentions that it is said in *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira* (vol. 6, p. 158) that this refers to Ibn al-Jawzī.





## مُوَفَّق

## *Granting enabling grace*

### 45.2 *Enabling grace [tawfīq] according to Imam al-Juwaynī*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the word *muwaffiq* comes from *tawfīq*, which, according to Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, is defined as: "the creation of the ability [*qudra*] of obedience [*ṭā'a*] and the inclination [*dā'iya*] within the servant to carry it out."

The meaning of *qudra* according to him is the soundness of the causes [*asbāb*] and means [*ālāt*].[411]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that causes [*asbāb*] refer to the things that allow one to carry out the action. The means [*ālāt*] refer to those things that enable one to arrive at carrying out the action. An example of a cause is the water one uses to perform ablution in order to carry out the prayer. An example of a means is the limbs that assist one in obedience.[412]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the opinion of Imam al-Ḥaramayn is based upon the view that the *qudra* remains for two periods of time [*zamānayn*].

The disbeliever is stripped of enabling grace [*ghayr muwaffaq*] because he does not have the inclination to worship Allah. Allah testifies to this in the verse: ﴿*Whomever Allah wills* ■ *guide, He opens his chest to Islam.*﴾ [6:125] This means that He ﷻ creates and places in the person inclination [*dā'iya*], yearning [*raghba*], and love [*maḥabba*] for obedience.

### 45.3 *Tawfīq according to Imam al-Ash'arī*

*Tawfīq*, according to Imam al-Ash'arī, is "the creation of the ability [*qudra*] within the servant to carry out acts of obedience, which is given to the servant simultaneously with the performance of the act."[413]

[411] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 45)
[412] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 45)
[413] The *Māturīdīs* agree that *tawfīq* coincides with action, and it is not possible to say that it is before the action or after it. The reason ■ because if ability was given before the action, the servant would be independent of Allah at the moment of the action, and this contradicts

*Qudra*, according to him, is the attribute or accident [*'arad*] given to the servant at the time of carrying out the act of obedience. This is based upon the view that this attribute of ability does not remain with the servant for two periods of time [*lā yabqā zamānayn*].

An objection to this view is that it implies that one is legally responsible before carrying out an act of obedience and necessitates that one who is incapable ['*ājiz*] is legally responsible to carry out the act. The reply (from Imam al-Ash'arī) is that legal responsibility [*taklīf*] depends upon the soundness of the causes [*asbāb*] and means [*ālāt*].

We gain from these two views that the difference of opinion from the angle of *taklīf* is only in wording [*lafẓī*], since there is agreement that *taklīf* depends upon the soundness of the *asbāb* and *ālāt*. From the angle of calling the soundness of the *asbāb* and *ālāt* 'ability' [*qudra*], the difference of opinion is real [*ḥaqīqī*]. According to Imam al-Ḥaramayn, it is called *qudra* and according to Imam al-Ash'arī, it is not called *qudra*, since *qudra* according to al-Ash'arī is an *'arad* given to the servant at the time of carrying out the act of obedience. The correct view is that of Imam al-Ḥaramayn.[114]

لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَصِلَ

*To the one He wills to arrive*

In summary, Allah ﷻ is the One who grants *tawfīq* to the one He wills to arrive at His contentment [*riḍā*] and His love [*maḥabba*]. *Tawfīq*, as mentioned previously, constitutes two things, namely, the ability [*qudra*] and [*dā'iya*] to perform good deeds within the creation. Thus, it is necessary to believe that Allah is the Creator of the *qudra*, which He places into those to whom He grants *tawfīq*. He ﷻ expands the breast of those for whom He wills the guidance of Islam.

the verse (*Verily, Allah is free from all need, and it is you who are needy.*) [47:38]

[114] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 45)



## VERSE 46

وَخَاذِلٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ بُعْدَهُ وَمُنْجِزٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ وَعْدَهُ

*And He withholds from whom He wills,*
*to become distant from Him,*
*And He rewards the one whom He promises*

وَخَاذِلٌ

*And He withholds*

### 46.1 *Allah withholds from whom He wills*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that *khādhilun* comes from *khidhlān*, which is the opposite of enabling grace [*tawfīq*]. The same difference of opinion mentioned in the previous verse exists here as well between Imam al-Ash'arī and Imam al-Ḥaramayn.[115]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *khidhlān* lexically means to withhold help [*nuṣra*] and aid [*i'āna*]. Technically, it means that Allah creates disobedience [*ma'ṣiya*] within the servant as well as the inclination [*dā'iya*] for it, or it means that He ﷻ creates within the servant the ability [*qudra*] for disobedience.[116]

لِمَنْ أَرَادَ بُعْدَهُ

*From whom He wills, to become distant from Him*

He ﷻ withholds from whom He wills from His contentment [*riḍā*] and love [*ḥubb*]. The one whom Allah guides to good cannot commit a sin, since Allah did not create within him the ability or capacity to commit a sin. On the other hand, those whom Allah has denied of His grace and blessings cannot obey the orders of Allah, for he does not have the power to do any good. The proof

[115] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 46)
[116] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 46)

of the Ash'arīs lies in the verse in which Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, you guide not whom you love, but rather Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided.*﴾ [28:56]

He ﷻ therefore restricts the breasts of those for whom He wills misguidance.[417]

وَمُنْجِزٌ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ وَعْدَهُ

*And He rewards the one whom He promises*

### 46.2 *The promise to reward and to punish*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the noble author indicated that the promise of Allah to reward the obedient believers [*wa'd*] with Paradise is definitively never broken [*lā yatakhallafu qaṭ'an*]. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*The promise of Allah. Allah never fails in His promise...*﴾ [30:6] and: ﴿*Verily, Allah never breaks His promise.*﴾ [13:31]

The *wa'd* of Allah is that which was always ■ His pre-eternal knowledge [*fī 'ilmihi azalā*]. Were it possible for Him to break His promise to reward [*takhalluf al-wa'd*], it would imply ignorance [*jahl*] on His behalf ﷻ. This would necessitate that His informing us contains lies. Both of these are impossible for Him [*mustaḥīl*].

As for the *wa'īd* of Allah ﷻ, it is the promise to punish the disbelievers with the Fire. This promise is never broken either. He ﷻ says: ﴿*The Word will not be changed with Me, and never will I be unjust to the servants,*﴾ [50:29] and: ﴿*And for those who disbelieve will be the Fire. (In it, death) is not decreed for them so they may die...*﴾ [35:36]

Regarding the promise to punish the disobedient believers, there is a difference of opinion between the *Ash'arīs* and the *Māturīdīs*. The *Ash'arīs* hold the view that their fate is ■ Allah wishes [*taḥt al-mashī'a*]. If He wishes, He will forgive them [*in shā'a ghafara lahum*]; and if He wishes, He will punish them [*in shā'a 'adhabahum*]. The noble author indicates this later on in the text, when he says in verse 116: "*And one who dies without repenting from sin, his matter is consigned to his Lord.*"

[417] Shaykh 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Itḥāf al-Murīd Sharḥ Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





The *Māturīdīs* hold the view that the promise of Allah to punish is never broken, just ■ the promise to reward is never broken. They interpret the verses indicating that the promise to punish [*wa'īd*] may be broken for the disobedient believers to be specifically for the believers who were already forgiven. These verses may seem general, but their intended meanings are specific. Once again, the difference of opinion is only in the wording [*lafẓī*].

The saying of the *Ash'arīs*, that it is possible for Allah to go against His promise, is directed to those whom He so wills to be saved from His punishment. The saying of the *Māturīdīs*, that it is not possible that Allah will go against His promise, is directed to those for whom only punishment has been promised.

However, Shaykh al-Amīr said: "It could be said that connected to His will is the possibility to pardon all the disobedient believers [*jamī' al-'uṣāt*]..."

The *Māturīdīs* hold the view that it is necessary that at least one person from amongst the disobedient believers be punished for his sins, ■ will be elaborated upon in verse 117: "*And it is necessary to punish some of those, who committed major sins, but to not reside [in Hell] not eternally.*"[418]

We understand from this that, according to the *Ash'arīs*, it is permissible to ask Allah to forgive all the Muslims without specifying some for punishment, and according to the *Māturīdīs*, if one makes such a supplication, then one keeps in mind that there remains at least one person who will be punished.

In summary, both agree that the promise [*wa'd*] of Allah towards the obedient is never broken since it is connected [*ta'alluq*] to the pre-eternal knowledge of Allah, and because of the textual proofs in the Qur'an [*dalīl sam'ī*]. If He ﷻ were to go against His pre-eternal knowledge, then this would result in ignorance on His part and would necessitate falsehood in His informing. The same is understood regarding the *wa'īd* for the disbelievers [*kuffār*]. As for His *wa'īd* towards the disobedient believers, they are under His will. If you were to say that Allah says in the Qur'an: ﴿*Verily, Allah forgives all sins,*﴾ [39:54] and that this necessitates that He goes against his promise, then the

[418] Verses 116 and 117 will be discussed in the third volume of this work.

answer is that this verse is restricted by another verse where He ﷻ says: ﴿*Verily, Allah does not forgive polytheism* [*shirk*], *but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.*﴾ [4:48]

This indicates that disobedient believers are under His Divine will, which is the truth.[419]

Additionally, breaking a promise to punish is not regarded as a defect. To forgive is an act of mercy, which is praiseworthy. Therefore, if Allah carries out His promise to punish someone, then His *wa'īd* is fulfilled. If He does not carry it out on others, then He has shown mercy upon them. The servant of Allah is therefore always between hope and fear.

## VERSE 47

فَوْزُ السَّعِيدِ عِنْدَهُ فِي الأَزَلِ  كَذَا الشَّقِيُّ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْتَقِلِ

*The bliss of the fortunate is by Him pre-eternally,*
*Likewise, the wretchedness of the unfortunate,*
*and these are not subject to change*

### 47.1 *The fortunate and the unfortunate*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that it is necessary [*wājib*] according to the *Ash'arīs* to believe that the bliss of the fortunate [*sa'āda*] and the wretchedness of the unfortunate [*shaqāwa*] has been pre-eternally decreed [*azalī*].

Obedience and Islam are signs of bliss [*'alāmāt al-sa'āda*], while disobedience and disbelief are signs of wretchedness [*'alāmāt al-shaqāwa*]. The ending indicates the beginning, so that if one's life ends with disbelief [*kufr*], it was pre-eternally decreed for him to be from amongst the unfortunate [*ashqiyā'*]; and if one's life ends with faith, it was pre-eternally decreed for him to be from amongst the fortunate [*su'adā'*].

These signs could possibly change according the Hadith: "Verily, one of you performs the actions of the people of Paradise until there is but an arm's length between him and it [i.e., Paradise], and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he acts with the actions of the people of the Fire and thus enters it. And verily, one of you performs the actions of the people of the Fire, until there is but an arm's length between him and it [i.e., the Fire], and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he acts with the actions of the people of Paradise and thus he enters it."[420]

According to the *Māturīdīs*, Islam itself [*nafs*] is bliss and disbelief itself is wretchedness. This means that if one dies upon disbelief then one's bliss changed to wretchedness, and if a disbeliever embraces Islam before death, then his wretchedness changed to bliss.

The difference of opinion is only in wording [*lafẓī*] since the importance according to both lies in the word 'ending' [*khāṭima*]. Thus, the difference of opinion [*khilāf*] lies only in the naming [*tasmiya*] and is understood as follows:

According to the *Ash'arīs*, Islam is a sign [*'alāma*] of bliss and not bliss itself [*nafs*]; and *kufr* is a sign of wretchedness and not wretchedness itself; and bliss and wretchedness never change [*lam yataghayyar*] because they are pre-eternally decreed [*azalī*].

According to the *Māturīdīs*, Islam is bliss and *kufr* is wretchedness, and they can change. Based upon the opinion of the *Ash'arīs* it is correct to say: "I am of the fortunate, if Allah so wills [*in shā' Allah*]," while it is incorrect to say this according to the *Māturīdīs*.

[419] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 46)

[420] Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate another Hadith with an addition in the text, which reads: "One of you will perform the acts of the people of Paradise ■ it appears to people [*fī mā yabdū lil-nās*]..." This means that they appear, in our eyes, to be doing the acts of the people of Paradise, while Allah knows best regarding their ending.

Ibn Rajab ﷺ said: "The words 'as it appears to people' indicate that what is hidden may be different from what is apparent to people, that a bad end is because of a hidden problem in a person, which people are unware of, whether it is a bad deed or the like, so that the hidden quality may lead to a bad end at death. Similarly, one may perform acts of the people of the Fire, but inwardly he has some good quality that prevails at the end of his life and leads to a good end for him."
(*Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, vol. 1, p. 172-173)

ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْتَقِلِ

*And these are not subject to change*

These two—i.e., the bliss of the fortunate and wretchedness of the unfortunate—can never change [*lam yataḥawwal*] from what was decreed for them, since they are connected [*ta'alluq*] to Allah's pre-eternal knowledge. If it were permissible [*jāza*] for them to change, then this would mean Allah's knowledge changes and becomes ignorance [and this is impossible for Him].[421]

## VERSE 48

وَعِنْدَنَا لِلْعَبْدِ كَسْبٌ كُلِّفَا  وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُؤَثِّراً فَلْتَعْرِفَا

*And according to us,*
*the servant is accountable through acquiring,*
*And he does not bring his actions into effect, so know this well*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that the purpose [*maqṣūd*] of this topic is to further clarify the *madhhab* of *Ahl al-Sunna* regarding the actions of the servants [*af'āl al-'abīd*], and to refute [*radd*] the *Mu'tazila* and the *Jabriyya*.

### 48.1 *The way [madhhab] of the Jabriyya regarding the actions of the servant*

The *Jabriyya* believe that the servant is coerced [*majbūr*], outwardly [*ẓāhir*] and inwardly [*bāṭin*]. Thus, the servant is like a piece of thread [*khayṭ*] carried by the wind [*hawā'*]. They deny [*yunkirūn*] legal responsibility [*taklīf*] on the part of the servant as well as regarding the sending of the Messengers [*irsāl al-rusul*]. They also claim that if Allah punishes the servant for a sin then this is oppression [*ẓulm*] on His ﷻ behalf.

[421] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 47)





### 48.2 *The madhhab of the Mu'tazila regarding the actions of the servant*

The *Mu'tazila* believe that the servant is completely free in his choice [*mukhtār*], inwardly and outwardly. Thus, the servant creates [*yakhluqu*] his voluntary actions [*ikhtiyāriyya*] himself. If these actions were created by Allah, then His punishment for sins would amount to oppression.

Both doctrines are false [*bāṭil*].

### 48.3 *The madhhab of Ahl al-Sunna regarding the actions of the servant*

The belief of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that the servant is definitively [*qaṭ'an*] not legally responsible [*taklīf*] for his involuntary actions [*fi'l iḍṭirārī*]—such ■ falling from a mountain (due to a tremor) or quivering (due to ■ illness)—since these are the actions of Allah as agreed upon by all schools [*ittifāq*]. These include actions of compulsion [*ikrāh*].

### 48.4 *Voluntary actions*

As for the voluntary actions [*fi'l ikhtiyārī*], these are also from Allah. However, these actions are brought into existence [*ījād*] by Allah, and ascribed to the servant by way of acquisition [*kasb*]. *Kasb* is defined as: 'the connection [*ta'alluq*] of the ability [*qudra*] of the servant and his will [*irāda*] to the action carried out [*fi'l*].'

And from the greatness of the power of Allah is bringing into existence an action at the time the servant is able to carry it out, which is neither by his own ability nor his own will. This is, for example, like using a knife [*sikkīn*] to cut something; the cutting [*qaṭ'*] is at the time the knife moves over the object and is not by the knife itself, so it is possible for the knife to move over its object without cutting, although this would violate the laws of physics.[422]

[422] We see this in the case of our master Ibrāhīm ﷺ, when he was hurled into the fire by Nimrod, that the fire remained cool instead of burning him.

The relation [*muqārana*] between the ability granted to the servant and his will, and the creation of the action, which is by Allah, is called *kasb*.[423]

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُؤَثِّراً

*And he does not bring his actions into effect*

The servant does not have any effect or impact [*ta'thīr*] on his voluntary actions, i.e., the actions carried out through choice [*ikhtiyārī*].

فلتعرفا

*So know this well*

The *alif* at the very end of this word is in the place of a light *nūn* of emphasis [*nūn al-tawkīd al-khafīfa*], since it occurs after a *fatḥa* in a state of stopping [*waqf*].[424]

[423] According to the *Ash'arīs*, Allah creates the actions of human beings as well as the power [*qudra*] and choice [*ikhtiyār*] that are exercised in relation to them, but the human being acquires them and accordingly becomes liable to punishment or reward for them. Voluntary actions are thus created by Allah but acquired by the human agent. Creation differs from acquisition [*kasb*] in that the latter is the outcome of the 'created power' of the agent, so that the same action is said to be created by the one and acquired by the other. The human being thus acquires credit or discredit for the action created by Allah.

[424] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 48). See p. 141-142 for Ibn Mālik's explanation of this rule.



## VERSE 49

فَلَيْسَ مَجْبُوراً وَلاَ اخْتِيَارَا  وَلَيْسَ كُلًّا يَفْعَلُ اخْتِيَارَا

*Thus, he is neither coerced, nor without choice,*
*And not all of his actions are by choice*

فَلَيْسَ مَجْبُوراً وَلاَ اخْتِيَارَا

*Thus, he is neither coerced, nor without choice*

### 49.1 *The servant is not coerced*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that since you are now aware that the servant only acquires his voluntary actions, you should also believe that he is not coerced [*majbūr*].[425]

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that this verse further clarifies the refutation of the *Jabriyya* and the *Mu'tazila*. Even though they were refuted in the previous verse with the words: "*And according to us, the servant is accountable through acquiring...*" as a refutation of the *Jabriyya*, and: "*And he does not bring his actions into effect...*" a refutation of the *Mu'tazila*, the scholars of this craft prefer additional clarification [*ziyāda al-īḍāḥ*].

The negation '*he is neither*' [*laysa*] is applied to and affects the words '*nor without choice*' [*wa-lā ikhtiyārā*].

There are two negations in this verse, *laysa* and *lā*. The first negation negates the second one, resulting in an affirmation [*nafiyyun al-nafiyy ithbātun*]. This means that the servant is not coerced [*majbūr*] but rather has choice.[426]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that some poets from amongst the *Jabriyya* composed the following:

[425] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 49)

[426] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 49)

ما حيلة العبد والأقدار جارية  عليه في كل حال أيها الرائي

ألقاه في اليم مكتوفا وقال له  إياك إياك أن تبتل بالماء

*What is the strategy of the servant upon whom the decrees,*
*Of destiny runs, in every condition, O you observing*
*As if hurled into a well, hands tied and is cautioned,*
*Beware! Beware! From getting your clothes wet*

Ahl al-Sunna responded with the following:

إن حفه اللطف لم يمسسه في بلل  ولم يبال بتكتيف وإلقاء

وإن يكن قدر المولى بغرقته  فهو الغريق وإن أضحى بصحراء

*If Divine care encompasses you, then water will not wet your clothes*
*And you should have no concern if your hands be tied*
*For if your Lord destined that you drown,*
*You would drown even if hurled into the desert*[427]

وَلَيْسَ كُلًّا يَفْعَلُ اخْتِيَارَا

*And not all of his actions are by choice*

Imam Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī said that it is also necessary to believe that the servant does not bring into existence his voluntary actions either; rather, there is only acquisition [*kasb*] as was previously explained.

In this is a refutation of the *Mu'tazila* who they claim: "Verily, the servant creates [*yakhluqu*] his own voluntary actions." Upon this did they build false [*bāṭil*] and corrupt [*fāsid*] notions [*umūr*].

[427] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 49)





An example includes their saying: "Were these voluntary actions created by Allah, like you (the *Ash'arīs*) claim, then it means that He ﷻ, when punishing the servant, would be guilty of oppression." Our response is: "The punishment, in terms of the part of voluntary actions, is in fact acquired [*muktasab*]."

If they reply: "Who then created acquisition [*kasb*]?"

Our response is: "Allah created acquisition, and He is not questioned regarding what He does [*lā yus'al 'an mā yaf'al*]."

If they reply: "If the action belongs to Allah, then it is fitting that He be attributed or described [*muttaṣif*] with that action, and it is unbefitting [*ghayr lā'iq*] to describe Him ﷻ in this way. An example is that if He created disbelief [*kufr*] in the human being that He should be called *kāfir*, and this cannot be accepted by anyone."[428]

Our response is: "The deed or action subsists in the object [*maf'ūl*] and not in the actor [*fā'il*]. Do you not see the people [*ashkhāṣ*] and the colours [*alwān*] around you? Certainly these are His creations, but they are not subsisting [*qā'ima*] in Him ﷻ."

Thus, the *Mu'tazila* are refuted through rational ['*aqlī*] as well as textual [*naqlī*] proofs.

As for the textual proof, Allah says: ﴿*Allah has complete power over everything,*﴾ [2:284] and: ﴿*He has created everything and ordained them in due proportions.*﴾ [25:2]

As for the rational proof: if the servant were the creator of his own actions, then he should be knowledgeable ['*ālim*] about all of their finest details [*tafṣīl*]. This is necessarily false [*bāṭil*] and what it leads to is false as well.[429] Moreover, if the servant creates then he would be a partner [*sharīk*] with Allah in His actions.

In summary, our involuntary actions are created by Allah, as agreed upon by the scholars, and likewise our voluntary actions, except that in the voluntary we have but inclinations [*mayl*] and direction [*tawajjuh*]. This is called acquisition and upon it rests legal responsibility [*taklīf*].[430]

[428] These examples should be limited to theological circles.
[429] Allah says: ﴿*Should He not know what He created?*﴾ [67:14] He indicates that any creator of something must be fully knowledgeable regarding the finest details of what he created.
[430] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 49)

## VERSE 50

فَإِنْ يُثِبْنَا فَبِمَحْضِ الفَضْلِ وَإِن يُعَذِّبْ فَبِمَحْضِ العَدْلِ

*If He rewards, then it is from His sheer grace,*
*And if He punishes, then it is from His sheer justice*

فَإِنْ يُثِبْنَا فَبِمَحْضِ الفَضْلِ

*If He rewards, then it is from His sheer grace*

### 50.1 *Allah rewards from His grace and punishes from His justice*

After establishing that Allah alone is the Creator of all actions, including our actions, it becomes clear that rewarding is from Allah's pure grace [*faḍl*]. This means from His sheer grace, generosity, and kindness. The Prophet ﷺ said: "None of you will enter Paradise by his [good] deeds alone." They asked: "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His grace and mercy."[431]

Thus, reward is from Allah's grace and not from the actions observed, because He ﷻ is the Creator of your actions. Allah ﷻ says: ﴿*And He created you and what you do.*﴾ [37:96]

And if one were to say that the servant creates his own actions, then where does the benefit lie and why would one then be worthy of being rewarded for something he created himself?

وَإِن يُعَذِّبْ فَبِمَحْضِ العَدْلِ

*And if He punishes, then it is from His sheer justice*

As for His punishment, it is from His pure justice ['*adl*], which means to place something in its proper place. Allah is therefore not ■ oppressor, for He is the One Who governs His dominion and does not act in the dominion of another.

[431] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 5673); *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2816)





It is now known that it is necessary to single out Allah ﷻ alone as Creating. This makes null and void the notion that something has an effect or impact, whether naturally [*ṭab'*] by itself or by a power or strength [*quwwa*] placed within it.[432]

### 50.2 *The various beliefs regarding cause and effect*

The first group believes that things purely happen naturally. They say that fire burns by itself and that a knife cuts by itself. This means that the cause is the effect itself, which is impossible. Those who believe that things happen naturally, without being caused by Allah ﷻ, fall into *kufr*, by consensus [*ijmā'*].

The second group, namely the *Mu'tazila*, believes that things have an effect through a power that Allah ﷻ creates within it. They believe that there is a power that Allah ﷻ placed in all things and thereafter He has no further concern with such things. Their belief is that man executes his actions by himself through his own choice, and that he does it with the ability or power that Allah placed within him beforehand. The more correct view [*aṣaḥḥ*] regarding this belief of the *Mu'tazila* is that they do not fall into *kufr*; rather, they are Muslims guilty of innovation and corruption.

The third group believes that Allah ﷻ creates an effect but that He always places between the cause and the effect ■ rational adhesion [*talāzum 'aqlī*], so that the one necessitates the existence of the other. Such people are regarded as ignorant and this kind of ignorance [*jahl*] could very well lead to *kufr* because they will deny the miracles [*mu'jizāt*] of the Prophets. This is so because in their miracles we see the effect without seeing the cause. Here the customary causes [*asbāb al-'ādiyya*] do not apply. The same applies to the miraculous acts [*karāmāt*] of the saints [*awliyā'*]. These phenomena contradict the notion that only physical laws exist in this universe. If we say that rational causes [*asbāb al-'aqliyya*] must exist between cause and effect, then we have to exclude any cause [*sabab*] that is not regular or customary. On the other hand, if we only accept the customary causes then it will lead to the rejection of the *mu'jizāt* and *karāmāt*.

[432] *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī* (verse 50)

*Ahl al-Sunna* believe that, customarily speaking, there is an adhesion [*talāzum*] between the cause and the effect of an event, while there is ■ [rational] possibility that it can happen in a different way and that the cause can be withheld.

An example is that the sun always rises in the east, but it is possible for it to rise anywhere else. Likewise, in scientific experiments where constant results are obtained, the cause [*sabab*] and effect [*musabbab*] will always occur in that fashion. We believe those things occur with a customary adhesion [*talāzum ādī*], with the provision that there is ■ possibility that the cause be withheld. This means that there is neither necessary adhesion between cause and effect, nor is there random sequence. We therefore believe that everything has its effect directly from Allah.[433]

## Verses 51-52

وَقَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الصَّلَاحَ وَاجِبُ  عَلَيْهِ زُورٌ مَا عَلَيْهِ وَاجِبُ

*And their saying, that which is good is obligatory,*
*Upon Him, it is an awful lie, ■ nothing is obligatory upon Him*

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِيلَامَهُ الأَطْفَالَا  وَشِبْهَهَا فَحَاذِرِ الْمُحَالَا

*Have they not seen,*
*the pain He causes children to suffer,*
*And its likes, so beware of absurdities*

### 51.1 *Allah is the sole Creator*

Allah says: ﴿*Allah is the Creator of everything.*﴾ [13:16]

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, the hearts of mankind, all of them, are between two fingers of the All-Merciful like one single heart, which He turns as He ■ wills."

[433] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī, *Ithāf al-Murīd Sharh Jawhara al-Tawhid* (footnotes of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks)





It is rationally permissible [*jā'iz 'aqlī*] that Allah creates both good [*khayr*] and bad [*sharr*], to create Islam in one person and disbelief in another, to create knowledge in one person and ignorance in another.

As a point of etiquette [*adab*], we ascribe evil to ourselves and good to Allah, but this should not negate our conviction that there is no creative power other than that of Allah.

Imam al-Taftāzānī said:

> Allah is the Creator [*Khāliq*] of all the actions of His servants, whether of disbelief [*kufr*] or faith [*īmān*], obedience [*tā'a*] or disobedience [*isyān*]. This is unlike the [doctrine of the] *Mu'tazila*, who asserted that the servant ['*abd*] is the creator of his own actions. The early *Mu'tazila* refrained from using the term 'creator' when speaking of the servant, and only used terms such as 'bringer into existence' [*mujid*], 'inventor' [*mukhtarī*], and so forth. But when al-Jubbā'ī and his followers saw that these terms all meant the same, namely, 'the one who brings out of non-existence into existence' [*al-mukhrij min al-'adam ilā al-wujūd*] they became bold and used the term 'creator.'[434]

### 51.2 *The madhhab of the Mu'tazila regarding good and evil*

The argument of the *Mu'tazila* is that Allah does not and cannot create evil, which is as follows: disbelief and disobedience are without ■ doubt evil and detestable, and if Allah has the power and will to create it, it would mean that Allah could potentially create what is evil and detestable, implying that Allah is evil and detestable. This does not apply to Allah, and He therefore cannot create disbelief, disobedience or any other evil.

This argument is refuted by the following verse: ﴿*Blessed be He in Whose hand is dominion; and verily, He ■ over all things Powerful* [*Qadīr*].﴾ [67:1]

[434] Al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (p. 80)

## VERSE 53

وَجَائِزٌ عَلَيْهِ خَلْقُ الشَّرِّ  وَالْخَيْرِ كَالْإِسْلَامِ وَجَهْلِ الْكُفْرِ

*It is possible for Him to create evil,*
*And good, such as Islam, ■ well as the ignorance of disbelief*

### 53.1 *Why some fall into disbelief and reject Islam*

The noble author uses the words '*the ignorance of disbelief [jahl al-kufr]*' as an example of evil created by Allah. It is as if the noble author is indicating to us that one of the primary reasons why one would fall into disbelief or rejection [*kufr*] of Islam is due to ignorance [*jahl*]. Imam al-Sanūsī identifies several reasons why one may fall into disbelief:

- Through the belief that everything in the Sacred Law can be understood clearly by the intellect. This implies that Allah can be understood by the intellect and that everything He does is through rational objectives.
- By following a group without investigation into their ways and ever asking questions. This is known as *taqlīd al-radd*.
- By interpreting the Qur'an only literally.
- Through ignorance of the general fundamentals with regard to what is necessary [*wājib*], permissible [*jā'iz*], and impossible [*mustaḥīl*].
- Through compound ignorance [*jahl murakkab*], which means that one does not know that he does not know, and is convinced that he knows.
- By being lacking a basic understanding and being ignorant of the cause and effect of things.

### 53.2 *Some of the wisdoms behind the creation of evil*

The Qur'an begins with the words: ﴿*In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful.*﴾ In these opening words, the most Merciful denotes the infusion of the Divine mercy into everything, including this world and the next, by bringing it out of a state of non-existence into the perfection of existence. It is a mighty mercy, and the very basis of our servanthood.





If Allah is ■ vast in mercy, then why do pain and suffering exist in the world? We find sickness, old age, death, storms, earthquakes, floods, draught, famine, disloyalty, unfaithfulness, sins, greed, and insincerity on the one hand; on the other hand, we also see beauty, health, prosperity, life, birth, intelligence, wisdom, growth, progress, goodness amongst people, sincerity, faith, charity, love, and the spirit of sacrifice.

The Qur'an tells us that good, evil, and whatever happens in this world, happens by Allah's will. Only Allah fully knows His will. We, finite beings, cannot fully grasp His infinite will and wisdom. He runs His universe the way He deems fit. The Qur'an tells ■ that Allah is Wise and that everything that Allah does is right, just, good, and fair. We must submit and surrender to His will. The Qur'an has not given us all the details about Allah's will, but it has enlightened ■ with the guidance that is useful and sufficient for us.

There are several points that we should keep in mind to understand this issue:[435]

- *First of all, Allah did not make this world a permanent world:* This is a temporary world and everything here has a time limit. When its time comes, it will come to an end and cease to exist. Neither the good things nor the bad things of this world are forever. We are here for a short period of time and we are being tested. Those who pass this test will find ■ eternal world that is perfect and permanent. Those who fail this test shall see the evil consequences of their sins and corruption.
- *Allah has placed physical law and moral law in this universe:* Allah allows suffering to occur when one or more of these laws are broken. The physical law is based on cause and effect. Sickness comes if one does not take care of one's health or is exposed to infections. A car accident occurs when one is not alert, or drives in ■ careless manner, or if the cars are not checked, roads and freeways are not well-constructed and properly

[435] Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi,
*Why Allah allows Suffering and Evil in the World*

maintained, or the traffic laws are incorrect or not properly enforced. The ways we exceed the measures set by Allah and violate His laws of cause and effect is incredible. In reality, it is by the mercy of Allah that we are saved. Strictly speaking, the question should not be why Allah allows suffering, but how much Allah protects us and saves us all the time in spite of our violations and negligence.

- *Suffering can also be a test and trial for some people:* Allah allows some people to suffer in order to test their patience and steadfastness. Even Allah's Prophets and Messengers were made to suffer. Prophet Ayyūb ﷺ is mentioned in the Qur'an as a Prophet who was very patient. Good people sometimes suffer, but their sufferings heal others and bring goodness to their communities. People learn lessons from their good examples. Martyrs die for their faith, soldiers give their lives for their countries, and this brings liberation and freedom for their people.
- *Allah sometimes allows some people to suffer to test how others would react to them:* When you see a person who is sick, poor, or needy, then you are tested by Allah. Allah is there with that suffering person to test your charity and your faith. In a very moving Hadith *qudsī*, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah will say on the Day of Judgement: 'O son of Adam, I was sick and you did not visit Me.' He [the man] will say: 'O my Lord, how could I visit You when you are the Lord of the worlds.' Allah will say: 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was sick, and you did not visit him? Did you not know that if you had visited him, you would have found Me there?' Allah will say: 'O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not.' He will say: 'O my Lord, how could I feed you when you are the Lord of the worlds?' And Allah will say: 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was in need of food and you did not feed him? Did you not know that if you had fed him, you would have found that to have been for Me?' [And Allah will say:] 'O son of Adam, I asked you for water and you did not give Me to drink.' The man will say: 'O my Lord, how could I give





You water when You are the Lord of the worlds?' Allah will say: 'My servant so-and-so asked you for water and you did not give him water to drink. Did you not know that if you had given him to drink, you would have found that to have been for Me.'"[436]

In addition to these:

- *Allah removes our sins while we are experiencing hardships:* 'Ā'isha ﷺ relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "For any calamity a Muslim suffers—even if it may be no more than a thorn pricking him—Allah erases some of his sins."[437]
- *Allah increases us in rewards:* Jābir b. 'Abdullah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "On the Day of Judgement, when people who have suffered affliction are given their reward, those who were pardoned [during their lives] will wish their skins had been cut to pieces with scissors when they were in this world."[438]

## 53.3 *Some of the wisdoms behind the creation of evil according to Imam al-Ghazālī*

You might say: what does it mean for Him ﷻ to be Merciful and to be the most Merciful of those who are merciful [*Arḥam al-rāḥimīn*]? One who is merciful does not see people afflicted or injured, tormented or sick, without hastening to improve their conditions when he can do so. But the Lord has the power to meet any affliction, to stave off any need and distress, to eliminate any sickness, and to remove any harm, yet He leaves His servants to be tried by disasters and hardships while the world is overflowing with disease, calamities, and tribulations; verily, He is able to remove them all. The Merciful One certainly wants good for the one who receives mercy. Yet there is no evil in existence that does not contain some good within it, and

[436] *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* (no. 896)
[437] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 6240)
[438] *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (no. 2402)

were that evil to be eliminated, the good within it would be nullified, and the final result would be an evil worse than the evil containing the good. The amputation of a hand is an evident evil, yet within it lies an ample good: the health of the body. If one were to forego the amputation of the hand, the body would perish as a result—a worse evil still. Hence, amputating a hand for the health of the body is an evil that contains good within it. However, the primary intention which comes first in the consideration of one amputating is health—an unadulterated good. Since amputating the hand is the way to achieve good health, amputation is intended for the sake of goodness; so health was sought for itself first, and amputation second for the sake of the other and not for itself. They both enter into the intention, but one of them is intended for itself and the other for the sake of the first, and what is intended for its own sake takes precedence over that which is intended for the sake of the other. Here, the saying of Allah ﷻ is *apropos* of: *"My mercy surpasses My wrath."*[439] His anger is His intending evil, so evil is by His intent, while His mercy is His intending good [hence, good is by His intent]. However, if He intended good for goodness itself, yet intended evil not for itself but because there is some good within it, then good is accomplished essentially, while evil is accomplished accidentally, and each according to His Divine decree. Therefore, nothing of this goes against mercy at all.

The answer to your (problem) is that a small child's mother may be tender towards him and so keep him from undergoing cupping, while the wise father makes him do it by force. An ignorant person might think that the compassionate one is the mother rather than the father. However, the intelligent understand that the father hurting him by cupping reflects the perfection of his mercy and love as well as the completeness of his compassion; whereas the mother was his 'enemy' in the guise of a friend, since a little suffering, when it is the cause of great joy, is not evil but good.

[439] *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, no. 419





Now, if a particular evil occurs to you without your seeing any good underneath it, or should you think it possible that a particular good be achieved without there being an evil underneath it, you should query whether your reasoning might not be deficient in each of these two trains of thought. As for saying that this evil has no good underneath it, minds simply are incapable of knowing that. In this regard you are perhaps like a boy who saw cupping as nothing but an evil, or like the ignorant person who sees punishment by death as an unmitigated evil, because he is considering the particular qualities of the individual executed, for whom it is indeed a sheer evil, while overlooking the common good gained for the entire population. He does not see that a particular evil leading to a public good is an unadulterated good; something that the good man ought not to overlook.

And you should question your reasoning concerning the second train of thought, when you said that it was possible that this good be attained without there being an evil underneath it. Here, too, there is something obscure and subtle: the possibility or impossibility of everything possible or impossible cannot be conceived spontaneously or by a simple survey, but may perhaps be known by an obscure, subtle discernment that the majority fails to reach.

Accuse then your reasoning in both these ways, and never doubt that He is the most Merciful of the merciful, or that His mercy takes precedence over His anger, and never doubt that the one who intends evil for the sake of evil and not for the sake of good is undeserving of the name of mercy.[440]

## VERSE 54

وَوَاجِبٌ إِيمَانُنَا بِالْقَدَرِ  وَبِالْقَضَا كَمَا أَتَى فِي الْخَبَرِ

*And it is necessary to believe in predestination,*
*And in the decree, as has been reported*

[440] Imam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful names of Allah* [*Al-Maqṣid al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allah al-Ḥusnā*] (p. 55)

### 54.1 *The necessity of believing in the decree [qaḍā] and predestination [qadr]*

The word 'necessary' in this verse means legally necessary [*wājib shar'an*] and not rationally necessary [*wājib 'aqlan*].

As for the words *qadr* and *qaḍā*, the traditional way is to mention *qaḍā* before *qadr*, while the noble author mentioned *qadr* first and then *qaḍā* for the simple reason of maintaining the rhythm and rhyme of the poetic metre.

As for the word 'report' [*khabar*] at the end of the verse, it means 'the well-known [*mashhūr*] narrations' of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

The noble author indicates to us in this verse that it is necessary for the *mukallaf* to believe in the *qaḍā* and *qadr* of Allah ﷻ. This belief is necessary from what has been transmitted [*sam'iyyan*] and not from the intellect [*'aqliyyan*].

Although it is necessary for the *mukallaf* to believe in them, *qaḍā* and *qadr* are not necessary for Allah; rather, they are of what is permissible [*jā'izāt*]. The Prophet ﷺ said: "[Faith is] to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in *qaḍā* and *qadr*, its good and its bad."[441]

### 54.2 *The definition of qadr*

The *Ash'arīs* define *qadr* as: 'the creation of everything by Allah ﷻ according to a certain measure and predestination.' *Qadr* therefore relates to Allah's attributes of actions [*ṣifāt al-af'āl*], namely: will, knowledge, and power.

The *Māturīdīs* define *qadr* as: 'the determination of the limits of everything, pre-eternally, for all of creation, by Allah ﷻ.'

Everything that is created is thus bound by the limits determined for it by Allah. These limits, in terms of beauty, intelligence, and so forth, are known to Allah pre-eternally and are therefore the knowledge of Allah ﷻ, which is an attribute of His Essence [*ṣifa al-Dhāt*]. Allah therefore pre-eternally knows the attributes and states of each of His creations.

These definitions differ slightly in wording but in fact expound on the same concept. We understand from both definitions that things such as beauty, ugliness, tallness,

[441] Al-Nawawi, *Al-Arba'ūn* (no. 2)





shortness, good, bad, punishment, reward, benefit, loss, and so forth, are all limits determined by the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

The implication of *qadr* is that Allah knows the magnitudes [*maqādīr*] and limits of everything, how it will perform, and how it will run its course, and everything happens according to His pre-eternal knowledge. In spite of this, human beings are not coerced with regard to their voluntary actions.

All voluntary actions are created according to acquisition [*kasb*]. Allah knows the limits and it cannot be said that He is unaware of them, for that would imply ignorance, which is impossible [*mustaḥīl*] for Him.

Allah's knowledge encompasses everything and everything happens according to His decreed limits and predestination [*taqdīr*]. Every possible thing [*mumkin*] has a cause [*sabab*] and its limits are known and determined by Allah. Every created thing thus manifests according to His knowledge, power and will.

### 54.3 *The definition of qaḍā*

*Qaḍā* lexically means 'judgement.' The *Ash'arīs* define *qaḍā* as the will of Allah ﷻ, which determines the destiny of everything pre-eternally. The *Ash'arīs* therefore define *qadr* as the actions and *qaḍā* as the will.

The *Māturīdīs* define *qaḍā* as the creation of things, by Allah, with increase or multiplicity and perfection. *Qaḍā*, according to them, is the actions [*af'āl*] of Allah. This means that *qadr* is the 'will which pertains to creating things.' Allah's will [*irāda*] is connected to different things of which the creation is but one amongst many others.

### 54.4 *The objective and purpose of the belief in qaḍā and qadr*

The object of belief in *qaḍā* and *qadr* is to be satisfied with the limits, decrees, and destinies decided upon by Allah ﷻ. He pre-eternally decreed the way in which the world functions. His knowledge encompasses how the world functions in certain lines and patterns, and He Creates according to His knowledge. Thus, whatever happens, we should be satisfied with His *qaḍā* and *qadr*.

The purpose of belief in *qaḍā* and *qadr* is to stress that His will, His power, and His knowledge, encompass everything. Nothing whatsoever can happen without it and that is His *qaḍā* and *qadr*.

### 54.5 *Being satisfied with the qaḍā and qadr of Allah*

It was stated earlier that we ought to be satisfied with the *qaḍā* and *qadr* of Allah. However, this does not imply that we must be satisfied with disbelief [*kufr*] and disobedience [*ma'ṣiya*], even though *kufr* and *ma'ṣiya* happen only with the will, knowledge, and power of Allah. To be satisfied with *kufr* is in itself *kufr* and to be satisfied with *ma'ṣiya* is in itself *ma'ṣiya*.

*Kufr* and *ma'siya* happen with the decreed limits and predestination [*taqdīr*] of Allah ﷻ. *Kufr* and *ma'ṣiya* are therefore things that are decreed [*maqḍī*]. *Qaḍā* and *qadr* are within the knowledge of Allah ﷻ. The *maqḍī* invokes *qaḍā* and *qadr*. We must therefore be satisfied with *qaḍā* and *qadr* and not necessarily with the *maqḍī* if it is *kufr* or *ma'ṣiya*.

Imam al-Bājūrī said that *kufr* and sinning have two angles. One angle is that it is decreed [*maqḍī*] and predestined [*muqaddar*] by Allah. The other angle is that it is acquired by the servant, in a manner that is consistent with the servant's choice. We have to be satisfied with the decree and judgement of Allah, but not with the acquisition of disbelief and sin.[442]

### 54.6 *Using qaḍā and qadr as an excuse for disobedience*

Although it is obligatory [*wājib*] to be satisfied with *qaḍā* and *qadr*, it is not allowed for one to assume how *qaḍā* and *qadr* manifest beforehand. For example, one cannot say: 'Allah has decreed that I must perform this act of stealing or murder and therefore I must do it, because I am destined for it.'

Neither can one use *qaḍā* and *qadr* in seeking to be absolved from a crime one may have committed. This is the way of the transgressor [*fāsiq*]. The believer never blames the *qaḍā* and *qadr* of Allah for his wrong doings. Allah ﷻ granted human beings the choice, as He says: ﴿*And have shown him the two ways.*﴾ [90:10]

[442] Sharḥ al-Bājūrī (verse 54)





At the same time, Allah has informed mankind that everything in the world occurs according to His will, power, and knowledge. The common matter between man's choice and Allah's destiny is that He ﷻ has paved the way of each person in this world and commanded him to follow the straight path. Therefore, man should not leave the path of guidance under the false pretence of destiny, because he simply does not know what his destiny is.

Similarly, he should not refrain from seeking means of living under the pretence that it is destined and decreed. Allah has created means of livelihood for people through others who act as causes for these means to reach their ultimate destination. He ﷻ did not only create causes and means but also results and consequences, as He is the Creator of all things. He is the Creator of mankind, his choices, actions, and the result thereof, but none of this does negates man's responsibility to choose the right path and follow what is good, while being fully aware that all his actions fall under Allah's ultimate power and Divine majesty, as nothing escapes His supreme knowledge.[443]

### 54.7 *Does supplication [du'ā'] deflect the Divine decree?*

*Du'ā'* is beneficial with regard to what has been decreed and what has not been decreed. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Nothing averts a destined decree except supplication, and nothing but piety prolongs life."[444] It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said: "*Du'ā'* is of benefit with regard to what has already happened or what has not yet happened, so adhere to *du'ā'*, O servants of Allah."[445]

The belief of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that there are two kinds of destinies: ordained destiny and potential destiny. Ordained destiny is what exists in God's knowledge and is not subject to change or alteration, and potential destiny is what is decreed in the preserved tablet and which is subject to change by God with

[443] A subtle point worth mentioning is that the reality of the *qaḍā* and *qadr* of Allah are beyond our comprehension, and that, as a matter of etiquette, we do not question Him regarding it.
[444] *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (no. 5677)
[445] *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (no. 3548)

His pre-eternal knowledge and absolute will and power. This kind of destiny is the one about which the Prophet ﷺ said: "Nothing averts a destined decree except supplication, and nothing but piety prolongs life."

## VERSES 55-56

وَمِنْهُ أَنْ يُنْظَرَ بِالْأَبْصَارِ  لَكِنْ بِلَا كَيْفٍ وَلَا إِنْحِصَارِ

*And from that (which is possible) is that He is seen with sight,*
*However, without 'how,' and without encompassing Him*

لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بِجَائِزٍ عُلِّقَتْ  هٰذَا وَلِلْمُخْتَارِ دُنْيَا ثَبَتَتْ

*For the believers this is possible,*
*since it is connected (to a possible event),*
*And this is for the Chosen one affirmed in this world*

### 55.1 *The beatific vision of Allah*

*Ahl al-Sunna* believe that it is rationally permissible [*jā'iz 'aqlan*] to see Allah ﷻ, both in this world [*dunyā*] ■ well as in the Hereafter [*ākhira*], and that the believers will experience this bliss in Paradise. This beatific vision, however, will be free from place, direction, modality, or encompassment.

Sight, according to those of insight, is a power that Allah placed in His creation. They do not believe that, in the case of the beatific vision of Allah, it is a condition where rays must be reflected to the human eye before He ﷻ can be seen, or that one must be directly facing Him in order to see Him. These conditions pertain to regular sight; however, they are not necessary in themselves.

The regular conditions of sight are eyes, a functioning retina, rays that fall on an object and are reflected to the eye, and that the object is located inside space.





*Ahl al-Sunna* raise the argument: "Are these conditions for sight, or merely for its customary functioning ['āda]?"

For example, it is possible for some to be able to see clairvoyantly. Here, the regular conditions of sight are not satisfied. *Ahl al-Sunna* therefore conclude that it is not impossible that Allah will place in the human being a sight other than the customary physical sight, which will enable such a person to see Him.

### 55.2 *Those who differ with Ahl al-Sunna regarding the beatific vision*

The *Mu'tazila* said that it is impossible to see Allah. Their argument is that sight is only possible when we have a point of orientation, distance and a side of space. Their strongest point is that sight must be in a facing state and if Allah ﷻ is to be visible then He must be directly facing the one who sees Him. This would necessitate that He ﷻ is in a place and that He has sides. It would also mean that He is either a substance [*jawhar*] or an accident ['*arad*]. Furthermore, if we see Him completely then He is limited, and if we see only a part of Him then He is divisible into parts.

### 55.3 *The proofs that it is possible to see Allah* ﷻ

The proof from the Qur'an is first that Mūsā ﷺ requested this vision, saying: ("*O my Lord, make me see, let me look unto Thee.*") [7:143]

Had this vision not been possible, the request for it would have been something of ignorance on his part regarding what is permissible and impermissible for the Essence of Allah, or it would have been some sort of foolishness, or trifling, or a request for the impossible; but the Prophets are far removed from anything of the sort.

Second, that Allah connected the vision of Mūsā ﷺ with the abiding of the mountain firm in its place, which is something possible in itself. That which is connected with the possible is also possible. The purpose of this statement is to inform that establishing something that is connected (to something else) is accompanied by the establishing of that with which it is

connected. The impossible cannot be established based on any of those things. Thus, the vision requested by Mūsā ﷺ, connected with the mountain's firm abidance, is something possible."[446]

From this, *Ahl al-Sunna* deduce that it is possible [*mumkin*] to see Allah, for if the mountain could have withstood the light of Allah, then the Prophet Mūsā ﷺ would have seen his Lord. If it were a condition ■ mentioned earlier, then it would be impossible to see Him, but if it is customary [*'āda*] then Allah will create in us the conditions that enable us to see Him.

The beatific vision will not be one that emanates from ■ point of orientation or ■ side, for Allah is free from sides and space. Allah is Dissimilar from the creation and ﴿*there ■ nothing like unto Him.*﴾ Seeing Allah ﷻ will not be like seeing the creation.

### 55.4 *The believers' vision of Allah in this world whilst awake*

Muslims are in agreement that no believer will see Allah with his eyes in this world. The scholars only differed with regard to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seeing Allah during his Ascent.

Some scholars even went so far as to consider such a person—who claims to have seen Allah whilst awake—to have left the fold of Islam, although most were cautious and did not accuse him of disbelief.

### 55.5 *The believers' vision of Allah in this world whilst asleep*

Imam al-Bājūrī said that with regard to seeing Allah while sleeping [i.e., in a dream], it is narrated from Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ that there is no difference of opinion regarding its occurrence and truth, for Satan cannot appear ■ Allah ﷻ and he cannot appear as the Prophets ﷺ.

Imam al-Bājūrī also said that if one sees Allah in ■ manner that is not impossible for Allah, then one has certainly seen Him. However, if one sees Him in a way that is impossible for Him, such as seeing Him in a form of a specific individual, then that is not Allah; rather, it is the creation of Allah, and the dream will need to be interpreted by those qualified to do so.

[446] Al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam [Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya]* (p. 76-77)





Some scholars said that even in such a case, one did actually see Allah, but the form seen is not the reality of Allah; rather, it is reflecting of the mind of the one having the vision.

It is narrated that Imam Aḥmad ﷺ said: "I saw Allah in ■ dream [*manām*] ninety-nine times, and I said: 'O Lord! How is it possible to achieve closeness to You?' He ﷻ replied: 'By the recitation [*tilāwa*] of My speech [*kalāmī*].' I said: 'O Lord, recitation with understanding [*fahm*] or without understanding?' He ﷻ replied: 'With or without understanding.'"[447]

### 55.6 *The believers' vision of Allah in the Hereafter*

Allah says: ﴿*No! Verily, from their Lord, that Day, they will be veiled.*﴾ [83:15] Imam al-Shāfi'ī ﷺ said:

> Allah veils Himself from a people (disbelievers) due to His displeasure [*sukht*] with them. This indicates that a group (believers) will see Him due to His contentment [*riḍā*]. By Allah, had Muḥammad b. Idrīs not been convinced that he will see his Lord in the Hereafter, he would not have worshipped Him in this world![448]

Abū Hurayra ﷺ narrates that the Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah! Shall we see our Lord on the Day of Judgement?" He ﷺ replied: "Do you have any doubt in seeing the full moon on a clear night?" They replied: "No, O Messenger of Allah." He ﷺ said: "Do you have any doubt in seeing the sun when there are no clouds?" They replied in the negative. He said: "You will see Allah (your Lord) in the same [clear] manner..."[449]

### 55.7 *The Prophet's ﷺ vision of Allah* ﷻ

Scholars agree that the actual vision of Allah in this world was experienced by none except the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Imam al-Bājūrī said the stronger opinion is that the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord on the night of his Journey and Ascent [*isrā' wal-mi'rāj*].

[447] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 56)
[448] Ibid.
[449] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (no. 806)

The Companions, however, differed regarding whether or not the Prophet ﷺ saw Allah on the night of the *mi'rāj*. 'Ā'isha ﷺ believed that he ﷺ did not see Allah. She said: "Whoever says that the Messenger of Allah saw his Lord is lying. He [Allah] said: *(No vision could grasp Him.)*"[450]

Some scholars argue that 'Ā'isha was a child when she said this and the *mi'rāj* took place during the Meccan period, before the *hijra*, whereas lady 'Ā'isha married the Prophet ﷺ after the *hijra*, indicating how young she was at the time.

On the other hand, 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās ﷺ believed that the Prophet ﷺ saw Allah on the night of *mi'rāj*.

Imam al-Nawawī said:

> When it is proven from the sound narration of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ indeed saw his Lord, then we cannot assume that he said it based on his own assumption. There is no doubt that he said this after hearing it from the Prophet ﷺ.[451]

Ma'mar b. Rāshid ﷺ said regarding the difference between 'Ā'isha and Ibn 'Abbās is that 'Ā'isha was not fully aware of this whereas Ibn 'Abbās was. Thus, when Ibn 'Abbās affirms and others negate, then it is a principle that the affirmation takes precedence over the negation.

Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī reconciled between the two narrations and said that the 'vision' stated in the Hadith is vision with the eyes of the heart, and not with his ﷺ physical eyes. This is established by Ibn 'Abbās in other narrations in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* where he said: "He saw Him with his heart."[452]

Imam al-Bājūrī said that the preferred position is that the Prophet ﷺ did see Allah with his physical eyes on the night of *mi'rāj*.[453]

[450] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 'Book of *Tawḥīd*' (no. 7380)
[451] *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (vol. 1, p. 577)
[452] Ibn 'Abbās said: "[The verse:] *(The Prophet's heart belied not what he saw; and verily, he saw Him at a second descent)* [53:11-12] means that he ﷺ saw his Lord twice with his heart." (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 176)
[453] *Sharḥ al-Bājūrī* (verse 56)



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In a time of competing worldviews, where reality has been obfuscated by obtuse philosophies and obscured by the facade of worldly allures, the need to revive higher theological truths is as urgent as ever. With *An Outpouring of Subtleties upon the Pearl of Oneness*, Shaykh Allie Khalfe lights the lamp that uncovers these precious truths, redirecting man's vision from life's mundane, outward forms, to its profound, inner meanings.

At the heart of this book lies the translation of *Jawhara al-Tawhid*, the timeless poem in creed written by Imam Ibrahim al-Laqani. This pearl is further enriched with the commentary of Imam Ibrahim al-Bajuri, *Tuhfa al-Murid*, followed by selections from the commentaries of Imam Ahmad al-Sawi and Imam 'Abd al-Salam al-Laqani. Finally, it is completed with numerous insights from the pens of classical and contemporary scholars, as well as the author's own beneficial notes.

In the first volume of this exhaustive work, the traditional theological topics of Divinity [*ilahiyyat*] are discussed in a detailed, yet easily accessible and clear fashion. These topics pertain to the existence of God, His attributes, and that which is necessary, possible, and impossible for Him, allowing one to arrive at the knowledge of God [*ma'rifa*].

> Our son, Shaykh Allie Khalfe, is an intelligent student of knowledge who has reached a high station with a sound understanding of the original text and has expressed that within his translation.
>
> —Shaykh Hasan al-Shafi'i

> This translation allows us to truly enter the rich, fascinating world of Islamic beliefs and theology, inhabited by scholars who were fearless in their convictions, precise in their arguments, deeply knowledgeable in a number of fields and, above all, had the ability to revive our faith.
>
> —Dr. Auwais Rafudeen

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